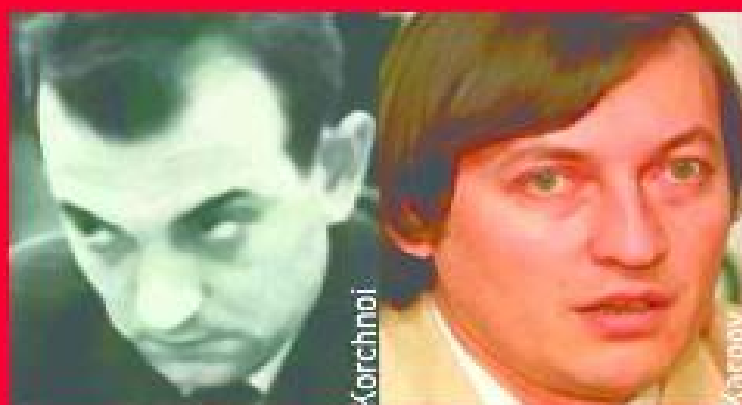




ON MY GREAT PREDECESSORS PART V

a modern history of the mid-20th century development of chess

GARRY KASPAROV ON MY GREAT PREDECESSORS PART V

with the participation of Dmitry Plisetsky

Korchnoi
Karpov

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Contents

Introduction: Life after Fischer

1 Viktor the Terrible

Marathon Runner

Child of the Blockade

First Gold

Drama on Curaçao

Opening for all Times

Scheveningen Experiences

Before and after the Escape

Rout in Evian

Belgrade Revenge

Baguio through the Eyes of Korchnoi

Last Battle for the Throne

Farewell to the Dream

Against the King's Indian

Strict Examiner

At the Turn of the Century

2 Anatoly the Twelfth

God-given Talent

'A serious Boy!'

'This is not my Cycle'

Duel of the Debutants

Leap into the Unknown

Coronation

Active Champion

Baguio through the Eyes of Karpov

Celestial Play

'There are no easy Matches'

Who's next?

Super-final

Chasing two Birds

[Genre Crisis](#)

[Against the Queen's Indian](#)

[Suffocation of the Grünfeld](#)

['Tournament of his Life'](#)

[King of FIDE](#)

[Bibliography](#)

[Index of Games](#)

Introduction

Life after Fischer

This volume is devoted to the twelfth world champion Anatoly Karpov and his historic opponent Viktor Korchnoi, and to their staggeringly dramatic struggle for the chess throne, which filled the unusual vacuum that had arisen after Fischer's untimely departure. Another important topic – the openings revolution of the 1970s-1980s – proved to be so extensive and interesting, that a separate, 6th volume, has had to be devoted to it.

In the previous volume I put forward the provocative suggestion that, in a match with Fischer, Karpov would have had real winning chances, and that the American champion declined to defend his title as he was afraid of losing to an unfamiliar opponent – the leader of a new generation, a forceful professional, who had fully assimilated the lessons of his great predecessor. Now I will try to justify this suggestion, by imagining a possible scenario of the match and carefully studying those unique qualities of Karpov, which enabled him for almost a quarter of a century to be at the summit of chess or literally only a step away. This chapter turned out to be one of the longest in the entire series, which is not surprising: Karpov's influence on the development of chess has been truly epochal – it was felt right to the end of the 20th century.

But an enormous contribution has also been made by Korchnoi, a legendary player, who has been able to accomplish the seemingly impossible – conquer time. Contrary to all the impressions about age limits, this great match and tournament fighter reached his creative peak at the age of 47, surpassing the former champions Petrosian and Spassky. In the history of chess he is the only challenger to have played de facto three matches for the world crown, in one of which, Baguio (1978), he all but became world champion. And this when he was 20 years older than his opponent!

After all, it appeared that the young Karpov, supported by the entire might of the Soviet machine, simply had no equals: the older generation

of top-class grandmasters had already left the stage, the middle generation had been 'knocked out' by the Second World War (and Fischer had 'knocked out' himself), and in the younger generation, for all its brilliance and professionalism, there was no star of champion-like magnitude. The only real intrigue in the mid-1970s appeared to be the Fischer-Karpov match, which would undoubtedly have given the development of chess a colossal impulse. When it collapsed, there was a temporary period of quiet and disappointment. But nature cannot endure empty spaces, and soon a vigorous attempt on the chess summit was made by Korchnoi, for which he was forced to leave the USSR, where he had been persecuted, and enlist the moral support of the West.

His battles with Karpov, especially the match in Baguio, had a very great influence on all aspects of the game – the purely chess aspect, off the board, and psychological. As it later transpired, this was the prelude to Karpov's clashes with the leader of the next generation – the author of these lines (the topic of Volume 7). But Korchnoi, after handing the 'Olympic baton' to me in our 1983 match, has continued to play successfully in tournaments and as a result has shown himself to be an exceptional example of competitive longevity. In this respect only Lasker and Smyslov can compare with him, but Korchnoi's victories have been achieved in the ultra-intensive chess of the present day!

All these matches for the world championship demanded serious research work. Here not only were the fruits of the post-Fischer opening revolution reaped, but also the rapid advancement of chess thinking was continued, towards the present-day computer era ...

When analysing anew the games of Karpov and Korchnoi, and remembering the games already examined of other champions and challengers, I began thinking about the role of intuition in the accomplishments of outstanding players. This question intrigued me: is this not the root of differences in playing styles? It turns out that the great masters can be arbitrarily divided into three groups.

1. Players with relatively poor intuition (of course, only by the standards of champions): Steinitz, Botvinnik, Euwe, Fischer ... But they had qualities which compensated for their somewhat straightforward play: erudition, logic, orderliness, iron will and an extraordinary capacity for work.

2. Players with strong, at times phenomenal strategic intuition: Capablanca, Smyslov, Petrosian, Spassky, Karpov ... Of the

challengers, perhaps only Rubinstein can be added to this group. All of them would find the best places for their pieces with staggering ease and accuracy.

3. Players with a strong specific intuition, operating in sharp situations where the material and positional equilibrium was disturbed: Lasker, Alekhine, Tal, Kasparov ... And also Chigorin, Bronstein, Stein and Korchnoi, who in the early 1960s was called 'Tal in reverse'.

Some may find this division questionable, but it is the fruit of a thorough study and comparison of the games of the champions. Incidentally, when analysing the old games with a computer, I discovered that many intuitive decisions by the classics were correct and that far more mistakes were made in later analysis. This would seem to be a paradox: after all, when analysing there is no hurry and one can move the pieces. But the point is that at this moment the intuition which operates intensively during a game, in conditions of extreme tension and limited time, is switched off. Intuition truly is the tsarina of the chessboard!

I should like to express my thanks to USSR Honoured Trainers Alexander Nikitin, Igor Zaitsev and Mark Dvoretsky, grandmasters Yuri Razuvaev, Yuri Dokhoian and Vladimir Belov, and master Alexander Shkarov, for assistance in the preparation of this volume for publication.

Chapter One

Viktor the Terrible

Marathon Runner

It is difficult to talk about a contemporary of mine, who has lived such a great, interesting and intensive life in chess. Just think – the first major successes of Viktor Lvovich Korchnoi (born 23 March 1931) were achieved more than half a century ago! Many of those born in the 1930s and 1940s have now given up playing, but even at the start of the 21st century Korchnoi continues to compete in tournaments, and the young can merely envy his energy, thirst for battle, and ability to give his all when playing.

This chapter is fully comparable in size with some of the chapters devoted to world champions. Here it is a question not only of the unique length of Korchnoi's chess career, but also of his rare inventiveness, and his tireless attempts to find something new in seemingly exhaustively studied positions. All his life he has been at the leading edge of chess thinking and he has made a valuable contribution to the development of the game. It was this fact that induced me to devote a large section to the original play of Viktor Lvovich, and to focus attention on his most important and vivid features.

Korchnoi's heritage is many-faceted – over the decades he has several times corrected and changed his style. But the main thing has invariably remained his search for chess truth. Korchnoi has always been merciless both to himself, and to his opponents. Of course, this feature of his character has not added to his number of friends. But otherwise it is probably impossible to seek the eternally elusive chess truth. One has to be prepared for every move being called into question, every decision being fiercely criticised. One must look truth in the eye and not be afraid to come to any conclusions, even the most unprejudiced, if they reflect the real picture.

Already in his youth Korchnoi had showed himself to be an unusual player. Most prefer to attack, and few like playing defensively, so to speak from the base line, patiently preparing to launch a counterattack.

But that is the way Korchnoi played: provoking the enemy fire, accepting sacrifices and then masterfully exploiting the weaknesses arising in the enemy position. Back in the 1950s this extremely risky style gave him the widely held reputation of being a difficult, awkward opponent for any grandmaster, right up to the world champion.

An amazing paradox: when, after passing hundreds of Korchnoi's games through a rigorous filter, I selected about forty of the most representative, it unexpectedly transpired that in the first twenty of them, covering the years 1954-1977, he had the black pieces! But if you think about it, this is fully in accordance with the character of his play. Such seemingly accidental coincidences merely confirm the overall trend.

Child of the Blockade

Korchnoi's childhood was difficult and full of deprivation, like that of many children of the war years. Half a century later he was to write: 'Apparently I did not receive a proper Soviet upbringing in my family. It is most probable that my father paid the full price for this carelessness – along with several hundred other poorly-armed volunteers, he died on Lake Ladoga in November 1941. This also applied to the remaining members of my father's family, where I was brought up – they all died from hunger during the siege of Leningrad. But I remained, I survived.'

Viktor was able to study chess seriously only at the age of 13, when in the autumn of 1944 he joined the chess club at the Leningrad Pioneers Palace. At the time he also signed up for two more clubs – recitation and music, although it quickly transpired that he had neither correct pronunciation, nor a piano that was essential for practising. But he already played chess quite well – a year earlier, soon after the partial breaking of the blockade, he had taken part in a junior tournament(!), apparently after reading an announcement on the bomb-damaged wall of the Anichkov Palace: 'Enrolment of schoolchildren to the Leningrad open championship takes place on Monday. Director of the chess club, A.Model.'

'At Fontanka we could hear the thunder of artillery shelling, when Viktor and I sat down to play our first chess game,' recalls his contemporary, the journalist Oleg Skuratov. 'My opponent was a thin, dark-haired boy wearing a neat quilted jacket. We were playing in the basement of the palace, and the cold was terrible, but the "hall" of the deserted bomb shelter seemed simply divine to us. I remember being

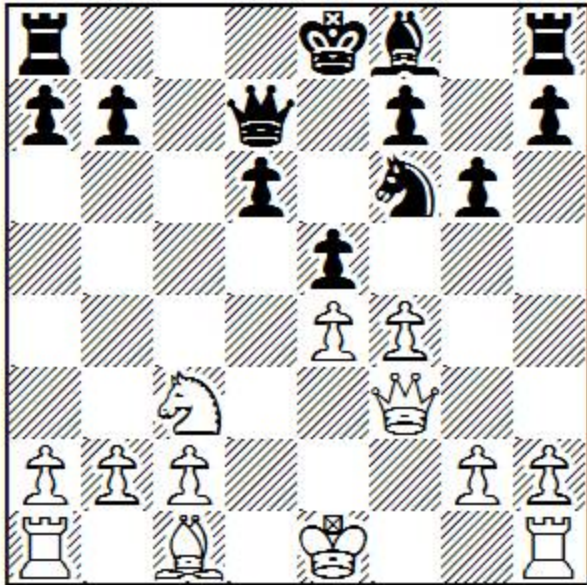
impressed by the way my opponent accurately recorded the moves of our game in a school notebook, and the chess notation signs intrigued me. As a result of this (as it genuinely appeared to me!) I lost a mysterious pawn endgame. With a face as long as a fiddle I went up to Model: "I lost!" "Against whom?" I again glanced at the notebook and read the name of my opponent: "Someone by the name of Korchnoi!" I said in vexation. The boy in the quilted jacket glanced angrily in my direction ... for a long time he did not forgive me for these inadvertent little words "Someone by the name of". At the age of 12 Viktor already had a heightened sense of dignity.'

His first books were Lasker's manual and Tartakower's work *Osvobozhdennye Shakhmaty* (Liberated Chess), and his first teachers were the masters Andrey Batuev and Abram Model. Then Korchnoi studied in the group of the subsequently well-known trainer Vladimir Zak (in 1946 the nine-year-old Boris Spassky came to him, and immediately became one of his favourite pupils) and within two years he was already participating in the USSR Junior Championship. After five rounds he was among the leaders, but then, after losing a game, he somehow went to pieces and in the end only shared 11th-12th places, while first place was taken by his future implacable opponent Petrosian

...

But in the next two national junior championships (1947 and 1948) Korchnoi was the winner, although in the second of these he had a difficult time. 'After losing in the first round, he so lost heart that he wrote a gloomy letter to his trainer Zak, in which he admitted that he did not believe in himself,' testifies the writer Viktor Vasiliev. 'Only a reply by telegram from his mentor, angry and at the same time encouraging, forced him to take himself in hand.'

Many games from that period have been lost, but one episode that has been preserved is the amusing finish to a miniature, played between the 17-year-old Korchnoi and the 11-year-old Spassky (Leningrad 1948).



11 ... Qg4? (instead of the normal 11 ... Bg7) 12 Nd5!, and Black resigned, after noticing to his horror that after 12 ... Qxf3 13 Nxf6+ Ke7 14 Nd5+ and gxf3 he loses a piece. The hopeless resistance could have been prolonged after 12 ... Kd8 13 Qxg4 Nxg4 14 h3 Nh6 15 fxe5 dxe5 16 Bg5+ Kd7 17 Bf6 Rg8, but the distressed Boris no longer had the moral strength ...

David Bronstein remembers a difficult simultaneous display with clocks that he gave against ten candidate masters in the autumn of 1948 in a Leningrad chess club:

'Each played for himself, but beside one of the boards, peeping over Cherepkov's shoulder, I saw a young and lively face with brilliant, clever eyes. The display lasted a long time – at least five hours. And at the very end, beside one board with a very interesting and complicated position, there were just three of us left. My main opponent was sitting calmly, but his voluntary consultant was fidgeting and literally piercing me with his glance. Some 15 minutes later Cherepkov offered me a draw and with a happy sigh of relief I agreed. And here Vitya Korchnoi (he was the consultant) leapt up from his chair, leaned across the chessboard and hurriedly, as if fearing that I might evaporate into thin air and disappear, with his inimitable pert voice that later became famous, exclaimed: "Didn't you win? But you promised! Only 5-5!" But I did not become flustered and I calmly replied: "What do you mean!

Who told you this? I was dreaming of 5-5. After all, these are players from a city with ancient traditions and a great chess culture.” And Korchnoi calmed down.’

This was the first meeting of two remarkable players, who since then have related to each other with invariable sympathy and respect.

After finishing school, having already decided to devote his life to chess, Korchnoi nevertheless entered the History Faculty of Leningrad University. ‘Student poverty was proverbial,’ he wrote later. ‘I myself remember: in my pocket I had money either for a tram ticket, or for the cheapest cigarettes. And very rarely for a miserable student dinner.’ Viktor was very fond of history, but he was even more fond of chess and ... card games (like, however, Lasker before him and Karpov after him). In the words of an eye-witness, ‘in the flat where many young chess players gathered, he could play chess or poker from morning till evening; he would take a “time-out” when he had to go to the next round of the Leningrad Championship, and closer to midnight he would again return and could play several hands of preference.’

Thanks to his rare independence and objectivity of thinking, Korchnoi enjoyed an indisputable authority among Leningrad’s chess players: when, in the course of a tournament, some conflict arose, the participants would often turn not to the arbiters, but to Viktor, and his verdict would put an end to the matter. However, this independence also had its adverse side. ‘I took every barrier head-on, and I had ridiculous confidence in myself,’ Korchnoi admitted years later. He did not have any qualified help, but when towards the end of the 1940s grandmaster Tolush offered such help, ‘to make a master out of him’, he proudly replied: ‘I myself will become a master!’ Which he soon did – after the Chigorin Memorial tournament (Leningrad 1951). But later, after seeing how Tolush had been able to transform Spassky, he greatly regretted his refusal ...

As a result, although the indications were that Korchnoi was a highly talented and promising player, each new step forward cost him enormous effort. In his first USSR Championship semi-final (1950) he contrived to start with ... 0 out of 7(!), but then he nevertheless managed to pull himself together at the finish: +4=4. He finished the next semi-final (1951) with a plus score, and in 1952 he finally broke through to the final – where he immediately finished in an honourable sixth place, ahead of Bronstein, Smyslov and Keres! This was his first major success.

According to Korchnoi himself, he achieved this success not thanks to his understanding of the game, but thanks to intensive work at the board: 'I would be outplayed, but I would resist tenaciously, and since grandmasters are ordinary people (they also become tired, make mistakes, and get into time-trouble), I was quite often able to emerge unscathed. In this tournament I played for the first time against world champion Botvinnik, and although the game ended in a draw, during analysis I realised how far I was from genuine chess wisdom. I ascertained that I had an insufficiently deep understanding of chess strategy. In addition, I didn't like and didn't know how to attack; defence was my natural element. This one-sided strategy was often exploited by my opponents ... I realised that I had to diversify my style: to be able to attack and to fight for the initiative.'

Korchnoi also qualified fairly confidently for the final of the next, 21st USSR Championship. In the semi-final (Vilnius 1953) Korchnoi won a remarkable game against Suetin. In a complex, multi-piece ending, he unexpectedly gave up both a pawn and the exchange with his 30th move, sharply activating his forces and achieving a rapid turning point in the play. 'Before this game for some reason it had not occurred to me,' writes Viktor Lvovich, 'that a sacrifice of material, even when forced, even when the queens are not on the board(!), can lead to the seizure of the initiative and the winning of the game ... I had to reinterpret many of the impressions of chess that I had had up till then.'

The USSR Championship, which took place early in 1954 in Kiev, became a new and vivid landmark in Korchnoi's biography. After beginning with a defeat against Suetin (in a risky 'Accelerated Dragon'), he scored three wins and two draws – with Taimanov and Petrosian – and established himself in the leading group. In the seventh round he had Black against the experienced Semion Furman, Korchnoi's future second and subsequently Karpov's long-standing trainer, who was half a point ahead of him. Furman's first move was not a secret to anyone – 1 d4!?

Since, as has already been said, the majority of the best and most characteristic games of the early and even the mature Korchnoi were played with the black pieces, his opening repertoire is of particular interest. After 1 e4 he most often and successfully played the French Defence, but he also left his mark in the Sicilian, Alekhine, Pirc-Ufimtsev and Caro-Kann Defences, and in the Open Variation of the Ruy Lopez (as will be described later). After 1 d4 for many years he

constantly employed the dynamic Grünfeld Defence, and only in his middle age did he turn to more fundamental defences – the Nimzo-Indian and the Queen's Indian.

At that time the Grünfeld Defence allowed wide scope for creativity – White was only just probing for ways to retain hopes of an advantage. But the main thing was that Black's strategic plan in this opening fully corresponded with Korchnoi's counterattacking style. Allowing White to create a strong pawn centre, he then does everything possible to undermine and destroy it, in the hope of exploiting the weaknesses that inevitably arise in the opponent's position. The following game with Furman, while not without its faults, gives a good illustration of this strategy.

Game 1

S.Furman-V.Korchnoi

21st USSR Championship, Kiev 1954, 7th round

Grünfeld Defence D92

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 d5 4 Nf3 (or first 4 Bf4 Bg7 5 e3 and Rc1 – *Volume 3, Game Nos. 12 and 29*) **4 ... Bg7 5 Bf4 0-0 6 Rc1**

After the usual 6 e3 c5 7 dxc5 Qa5 White does not gain any advantage (Rauzer-Alatortsev, 7th USSR Championship, Moscow 1931; Levenfish-Botvinnik, 11th matchgame, Moscow/Leningrad 1937).

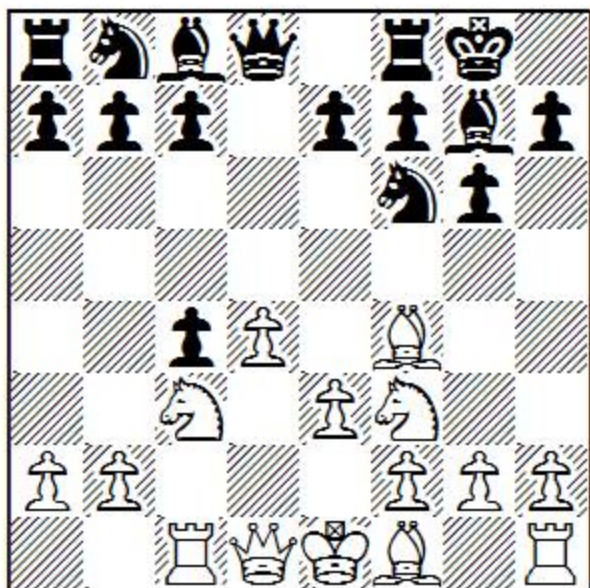
'The idea of the variation with 6 Rc1 is to seize the c-file, control of which plays an important role in the subsequent play; in addition, the threat to the c7-pawn induces Black to take on c4, which is also of definite benefit to White.' (Furman). This variation became especially popular at the turn of the 20th-21st centuries. It need hardly be added that today it has been exhaustively studied.

6 ... dxc4

This is considered more reliable than 6 ... c5 7 dxc5 Be6, as in Ragozin's games with Botvinnik (8th matchgame, Leningrad 1940) and Mikenas (12th USSR Championship, Moscow 1940), or 7 ... dxc4 8 Qxd8 Rxd8 9 e3 (9 e4!? Na6 10 e5 Bronstein-Filip, Amsterdam Candidates 1956) 9 ... Na6 10 c6 bxc6 11 Bxc4 Nd5 12 Be5 Nb6 13 Be2 f6 14 Bg3 with a complicated ending, slightly better for White (Korchnoi-Stein, 30th USSR Championship, Erevan 1962).

7 e3

Strengthening the d4-point. The game Borisenko-Korchnoi (Leningrad 1953) went 7 e4 c5 8 dxc5 Qa5 9 Nd2 Be6 10 Bxc4 Bxc4 11 Nxc4 Qxc5 12 Qe2 Nc6 with equality, but later, against Zagorovsky (Sochi 1958), Korchnoi employed the strong novelty 9 e5! After this 7 ... Bg4! came to the forefront (Pachman-Gligoric, Havana 1962). This continuation was actively tested at the end of the 20th century, and in the main line 8 Bxc4 Bxf3 9 gxf3 Nh5 10 Be3 e5 11 dxe5 Bxe5 12 Qxd8 Rxd8 Black has a quite acceptable ending.



7 ... Be6!?

A novelty, although, it is also possible to play 7 ... c5 8 Bxc4 cxd4 9 Nxd4 Nbd7 10 Bg3 Nb6 (but not 10 ... e5? 11 Ndb5 Ne8 12 Ne4 Qa5+ 13 Qd2 Qxd2+ 14 Nxd2 a6 15 Nc3 Nd6 16 Nd5! Furman-Livshin, 3rd round) 11 Bb3 Bg4 12 f3 Bd7 13 0-0 Nh5 (Borisenko-Byvshev, Leningrad 1954) or even 7 ... Nbd7!? 8 Bxc4 c5 (Karpov-Kasparov, 3rd matchgame, New York rapidplay 2002), in both cases with equality.

8 Ng5 Bd5

For many years this move was made automatically, until in the game Dreev-Sutovsky (Essen 2000) 8 ... Bg4!? 9 f3 Bc8 occurred. Later I successfully played this against Karpov (1st matchgame, New York rapidplay 2002).

9 Nxd5

A seemingly natural exchange. In reply to 9 e4 Black had prepared 9 ... h6! 10 exd5 hxg5 11 Bxg5 Nxd5 12 Bxc4 Nb6 13 Bb3 Nc6, for example: 14 d5 Nd4 15 0-0 Re8 with equality (Toran-Korchnoi, Palma de Mallorca 1968), or 14 Ne2!? (an attempt to exploit the power of the two bishops) 14 ... a5, and present day practice has shown that Black has sufficient counterplay.

9 ... Nxd5 10 Bg3?!

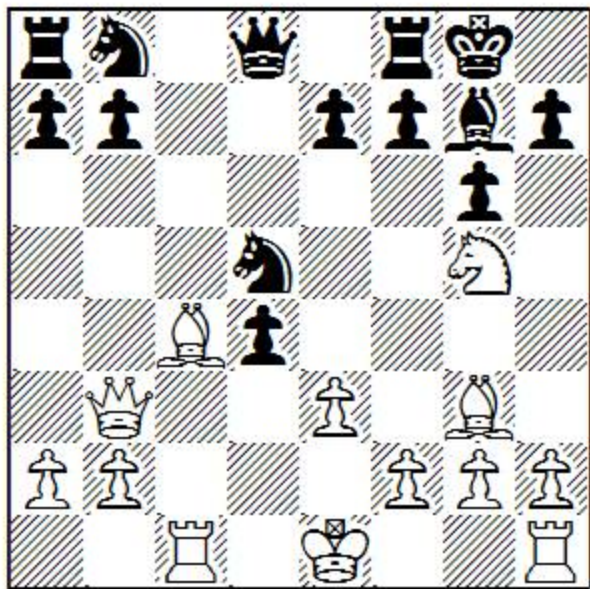
Retaining the bishop in the hope of quickly completing his development and seizing the initiative. However, this does not succeed and the move in the game proves to be a loss of an important tempo. Since the mid-1980s the immediate 10 Bxc4 has been played, with the gambit idea 10 ... Nxf4 11 Qf3!

10 ... c5!

A typically 'Grünfeld' undermining move, emphasising White's backward development. 'Of course, I didn't even think of keeping the pawn by 10 ... b5? in view of 11 b3!' (Korchnoi)

11 Bxc4 cxd4 12 Qb3

If 12 0-0, then 12 ... e6, attacking the knight at g5 and remaining a pawn up. Apparently Furman was pinning all his hopes on the queen move, which creates threats against the knight at d5, the f7-point and the b7-pawn.



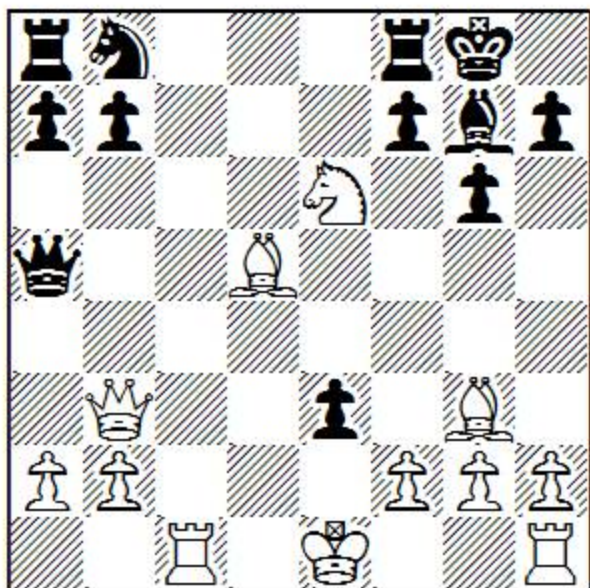
12 ... dxe3!?

‘The game enters a phase of wild complications. After thinking for more than an hour, I rejected 12 ... e6 in view of 13 Qxb7 Nd7 (13 ... Nb6 14 Nxf7) 14 Bxd5.’ (Korchnoi). Although, in my view, after 14 ... Qxg5 it is only White who may have problems in this position.

There was another reasonable alternative in 12 ... Qa5+ 13 Ke2, and now not 13 ... Nb6?! (with the idea of 14 Nxf7 Nxc4 A.Geller) on account of 14 Bxf7+ Kh8 15 h4 Nc6 16 h5!? Qxg5 17 hxg6 h5(6) 18 Bf4 with a dangerous attack, but 13 ... d3+ 14 Bxd3 (14 Kxd3 Na6 15 Bxd5 Rad8! 16 Ke4 e6 etc.) 14 ... Nc6 15 Ne4 Ndb4 with equality, or 13 ... e6 14 Bxd5 Qxd5! (this is simpler than 14 ... exd5 15 Qxb7 Na6 16 Bd6 dxe3 17 fxe3 d4! 18 Nf3 Qxa2 19 Nxd4! Rfe8 20 Rhd1 Rad8 21 Qb5!?) 15 Qxd5 exd5 16 Rc7 b6 with a favourable ending for Black. However, the move in the game is sharper and more interesting.

Either way, it becomes obvious that the well-known theoretician and ‘White expert’ Furman has already lost the opening duel. By the 12th(!) move White has ended up in an unpleasant position and he is obliged to seek a way of maintaining the balance. It seems to me that this demonstrates the level of theoretical development at that time.

13 Bxd5 e6 (a double attack, the bishop being unable to move on account of 14 ... Qd2+) 14 Nxe6 Qa5+



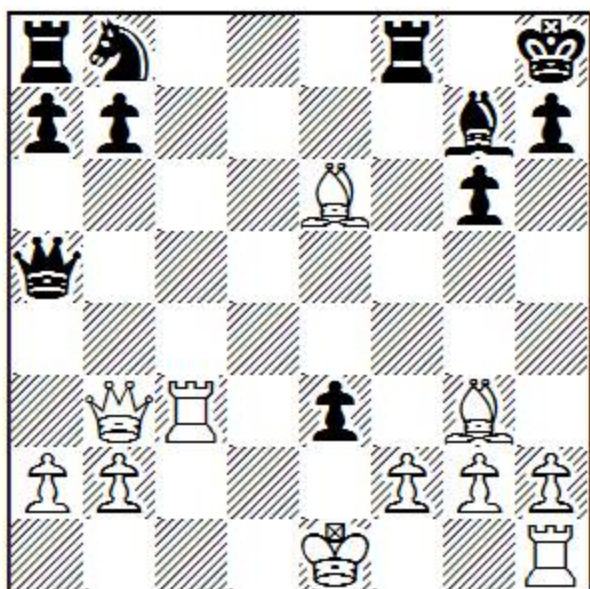
15 Rc3

After 15 Kf1 fxe6 16 Bxe6+ (16 Bf3 Nc6) 16 ... Kh8 17 Qxe3 Nc6 (Korchnoi) Black has a serious initiative for the pawn: it is hard for White to bring his rook at h1 into play and to safeguard his king.

15 ... fxe6 16 Bxe6+?!

'White continues to play for an attack and ends up in an inferior position. Instead of this he could have gone into a roughly equal ending: 16 Bxb7 Bxc3+ 17 Qxc3 Qb6 18 Qb3 exf2+ 19 Ke2 Nd7 20 Qxb6 axb6 21 Bxa8 Rxa8.' (Korchnoi). Or ventured the sharp 17 bxc3 exf2+ 18 Ke2 (18 Bxf2? Qe5+ 19 Kf1 Qf5) 18 ... Qf5 19 Rf1 Na6 etc.

16 ... Kh8



17 0-0?!

Black's position is also preferable after 17 fxe3 Nc6 18 Bf2 Bxc3+ 19 bxc3 Rf6 20 0-0 Raf8 (it is not easy for the white bishops to display their power), but the play would still have been unclear.

17 ... e2!

Now Black's advantage is obvious: this 'weak' pawn turns out to be immune on account of the fork at d4. 'It was less good to play 17 ... exf2+ 18 Bxf2 Bxc3? 19 bxc3 with the threat of mate on the long diagonal, or 17 ... Bxc3 18 bxc3! Nc6 19 Qxb7 with advantage to White.' (Korchnoi)

18 Re1 Nc6 19 Rcc1?

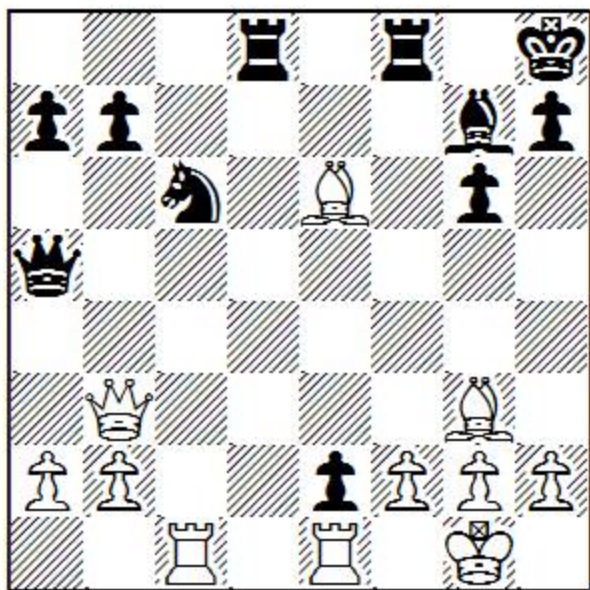
Nevertheless 19 Bc4 was the lesser evil, although after 19 ... Rae8 20 Rcc1 Qd2 21 f3 Nd4 22 Qd3 Qg5 the e2-pawn would cause White a mass of problems.

19 ... Rad8?

'Here I repeated Furman's mistake – I continued playing for an attack, whereas it was time to follow a more prosaic way: 19 ... Nd4! 20 Qd5 (20 Qc4 b5! – G.K.) 20 ... Qb6 21 Bg4 Rad8 22 Qc4 Qxb2 with some advantage to Black.' (Korchnoi)

Too modest an evaluation! After 20 ... Qd2! 21 Be5 Rad8 22 Bxg7+ Kxg7 23 Qxb7+ Kh6 White most probably has no defence, for example: 24 Bb3 Rde8 (threatening ... Qxc1) 25 Rb1 Rxf2 26 Bg8 (desperation) 26 ... Rxc8 (or simply 26 ... Rf1+) 27 Kxf2 Re8 28 Kg1 Nc2, and again the game is decided by the e-pawn. Had Black exploited this chance, the game would have become a splendid work of chess art ...

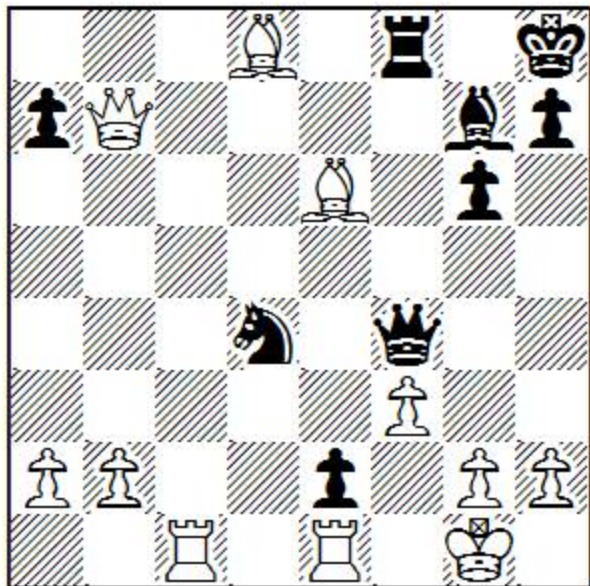
I should add that the immediate 19 ... Qd2 is less effective in view of 20 Qe3 Qxe3 21 fxe3 Rae8 22 Bd7 Rxe3 23 Bf2 Bd4 24 Bxc6 bxc6 25 b4 Kg8 26 h3, and although it is not evident how White can disentangle himself, it is also unclear how Black can win. Say, 26 ... a5 27 bxa5 c5 28 Rb1 Re7 29 Bxd4 cxd4 30 Rb3 Rd8 31 Rd3 with a probable draw.



20 Qxb7 (now White has a perfectly acceptable position and even chances of an advantage) **20 ... Nd4 21 Bc7 Qd2 22 Bxd8 Qf4**

‘The threats look very dangerous, but Furman finds the correct line of play.’ (Korchnoi)

23 f3



23 ... Be5?

An unsuccessful attempt to maintain the tension. 23 ... Rxd8 was essential ‘with a complicated and double-edged game’ (Korchnoi), for example: 24 Rc8 Nxe6 25 Rxd8+ Nxd8 26 Qe7 Bd4+ 27 Kh1 Bb6 28 Qxe2 Nf7, and although White has a small material advantage, Black should be able to save himself.

24 g3 Qe3+?!

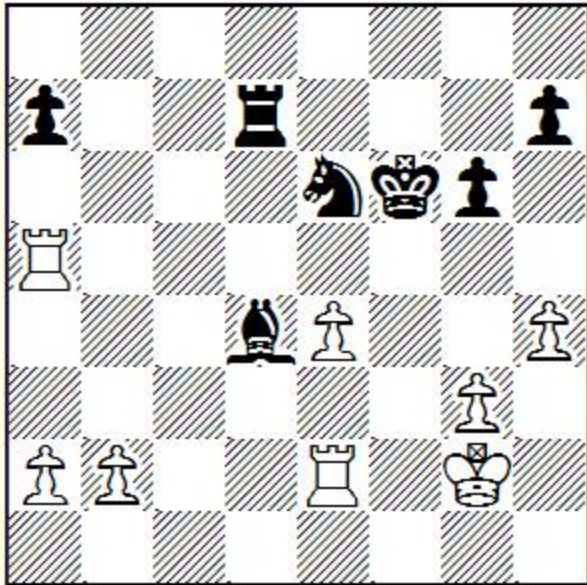
24 ... Nxf3+? 25 Kh1 Qh6 did not work on account of 26 Bf6+!, but 24 ... Qxf3 25 Qxf3 Nxf3+ 26 Kg2 Nxe1+ 27 Rxe1 Rxd8 was more tenacious (Korchnoi), although after 28 Rxe2 Black would have faced an unpleasant defence in an endgame a pawn down.

25 Kg2 Nxe6 (of course, not 25 ... Nxf3? 26 Bf6+!)

26 Qe4?

In fearful time-trouble (less than a minute for 15 moves!) Furman hastens to exchange the queens and misses a simple win – 26 Be7 Rf7 (26 ... Rg8 27 Qe4) 27 Qc8+ or 27 Rc2!

26 ... Qxe4 27 fxe4 Rxd8 28 Rxe2 Kg7 (Black has managed to restore approximate material equality and consolidate his position) 29 Rc4 Kf6 30 Ra4 Rd7 31 Ra5 Bd4 32 h4 ½-½



Draw agreed on White's proposal: the rook and couple of pawns are somewhat stronger than the two minor pieces, but ... time-trouble!

After this fighting draw Korchnoi gained five successive wins and, with a score of $9\frac{1}{2}$ out of 12, was leading the tournament race! But then Yuri Averbakh, a participant in the recent Candidates tournament in Zürich, plucked up courage and surged ahead. In the final, 19th round, he had Black against Korchnoi ... Years later Yuri Lvovich recalled:

'Leading Korchnoi and Taimanov by $1\frac{1}{2}$ points, I was feeling very good-humoured, and I naively assumed that my opponent's mood would be similar: all the same I could not be caught, and he was assured of a share of second place. After Korchnoi employed an improvement, I should have realised that he was not at all peacefully inclined, but I was still in a placid mood and I simply could not summon up any fighting spirit, even when I realised that I was in a lost ending. However, unexpectedly the spectators came to my aid. They were openly supporting the youngest competitor and were not afraid of loudly expressing their sympathy. And when I ended up in a critical position, from the gallery they began chanting in a whisper: "Averbakh, resign! Averbakh, resign!" This acted on me like the call of a battle trumpet, and, gritting my teeth, I began seeking the slightest saving chances. I set myself the objective of not losing before the time control on move 40, in order to adjourn the game and not give pleasure to Korchnoi's

most zealous supporters. I fulfilled this minimum objective, by holding out to move 40, but my position remained cheerless. And here I was helped by ... Korchnoi himself! Instead of adjourning the game, he decided to finish me off straight away, seeing as he still had time on his clock. But in the heat of the moment he missed a win ... The game was adjourned only on the 56th move and agreed drawn without being resumed.'

This is merely one of numerous episodes that reveal Korchnoi's chess character. He did indeed earn general sympathy with his bold and versatile play, and he became one of the heroes of that championship: 1. Averbakh – 14½ out of 19; 2-3. Korchnoi and Taimanov – 13; 4-5. Lisitsyn and Petrosian – 12½; 6. Kholmov – 10½; 7-9. Furman, Nezhmetdinov and Suetin – 10, etc.

'In his person, Soviet chess has a talented representative with a distinctive style, a fully-fledged candidate for the grandmaster title. In his first appearances Korchnoi introduced himself as a player who was skilled in complications and the calculation of sharp variations, but now, while retaining this valuable quality, he has shown that he can also play in classical positional style. Korchnoi is very young: during the tournament he was not yet 23. This also partly explains the unjustified risks which he took in certain games. And although he was sometimes able to win by these means, he should realise that this is an unreliable way of making further progress,' Alexander Konstantinopolsky wrote in his concluding article.

The fact that this success in the national championship was no accident was confirmed by Viktor a month later, in the first international tournament of his career in Bucharest (1954). Here he faced fierce rivalry from Rashid Nezhmetdinov, an experienced master from Kazan, who set a fast pace from the start. Only after a win against Filip in the 12th round was Korchnoi able to catch the leader. But how difficult a win that was!

'Genuine chess masterpieces are created when a resourceful and clever attack encounters a fierce and inventive defence. Defending is considered a thankless task, although it has its romanticism,' Korchnoi wrote in 1961. 'But masters of defence (Steinitz, Lasker, Nimzowitsch, Botvinnik, Petrosian) have made no less a contribution to chess history than players of attacking style (Morphy, Anderssen, Alekhine, Tal, Geller). My chess tastes are revealed best of all by the following game.'

Game 2

M.Filip-V.Korchnoi

Bucharest 1954, 12th round

Grünfeld Defence D86

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 d5 4 cxd5 Nxd5 5 e4 Nxc3 6 bxc3 Bg7 7 Bc4 0-0

One of Korchnoi's bold experiments: instead of the usual move 7 ... c5 he employs Simagin's difficult variation, where Black first plays ... Nc6 and develops his queenside.

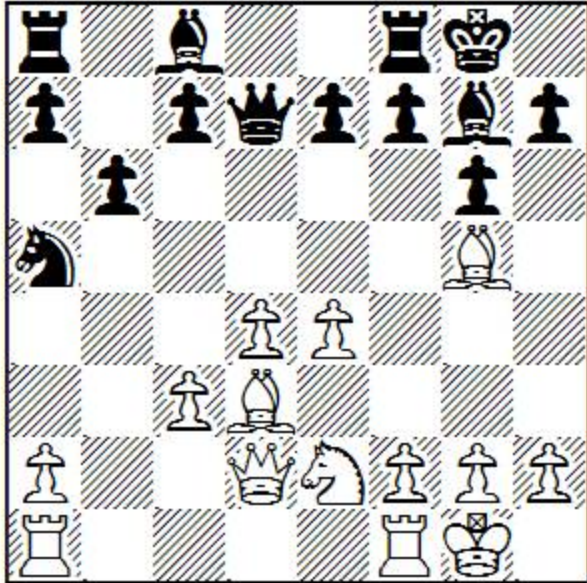
8 Ne2 Nc6

Now White retains his powerful centre and is bound to gain an advantage, but it is here that Black's main hope is concealed: demonstrating the advantage demands active play (an axiom formulated long ago by Steinitz), and the opponent may give himself weaknesses – targets for a counterattack!

9 Bg5!?

'Since Black is not attacking the d4-point, White has the possibility of developing his bishop not at e3, as usual, but rather more actively,' Korchnoi explains. A couple of months earlier, in the USSR Championship, Lilienthal played 9 0-0 against him (9 h4?! – *Volume 3, Game No.61*), and after the moves 9 ... Qd7 (Korchnoi's patent move; the standard reply is 9 ... b6) 10 Ba3?! Na5 11 Bd3 b6 12 Nf4?! Bb7 13 Qe2 Rfd8 14 Rad1 e6 15 e5 c5! 16 dxc5 Qc7! 17 cxb6?! Qxe5 18 Qxe5 Bxe5 19 Ne2 axb6 20 Bc1 Bd5 Black accurately converted his advantage in the ending.

9 ... Qd7 (Korchnoi is faithful to his move and is not in a hurry to play 9 ... Na5, Kopylov-Simagin, 19th USSR Championship, Moscow 1951)
10 0-0 (10 Qd2 e5!?) **10 ... Na5 11 Bd3 b6 12 Qd2**



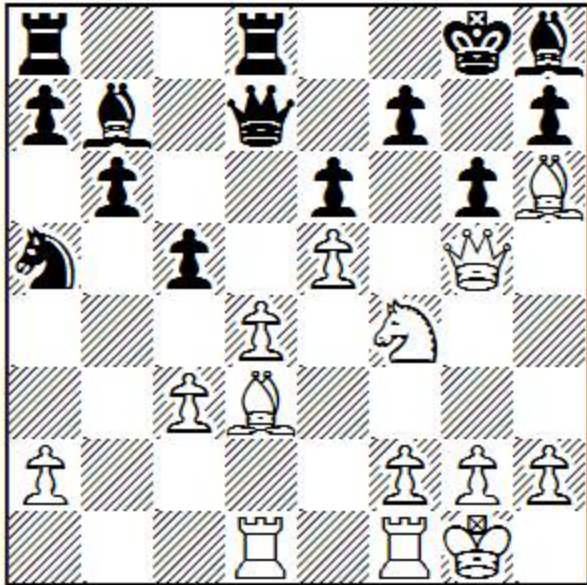
12 ... Rd8?!

The same course of complicating the play as much as possible. 'Black, who is playing for a win, deliberately subjects himself to a dangerous attack, hoping later to gain counterplay in the centre. After 12 ... c5 13 Bh6 White would have retained a minimal advantage in a comparatively simple position.' (Korchnoi)

13 Bh6 Bh8 14 Rad1 Bb7 15 Qg5! e6 (preparing ... c7-c5; if immediately 15 ... c5, then 16 d5) **16 e5!**

Exploiting the weakening of the f6-square. If 16 f4 Black was intending 16 ... f6 17 Qg3 f5.

16 ... c5 17 Nf4



Filip conducts the game well. All his forces are trained on the kingside, Nh5-f6+ or h2-h4-h5 is threatened, and for the moment it is not possible to exploit White's weaknesses in the centre (the d5-square and the d4-pawn) and on the queenside (the c4-square). However, Black's position is by no means lost: there is no forced mate, and in the distant future he will have chances of launching a counterattack.

17 ... cxd4 18 cxd4

The immediate 18 Nh5!? came into consideration. Then it is dangerous to play 18 ... Qd5 19 cxd4! (the queen must not be diverted from the defence of the king), while after 18 ... f5 19 cxd4 Qf7 20 Nf4 to avoid the worst Black would have had to exchange the dark-squared bishops – 20 ... Bg7 21 Bxg7 Kxg7, but with 22 Be2 followed by h2-h4 White would have retained a clear initiative. All the same, the weakening of the black king's defences is more important than all other factors!

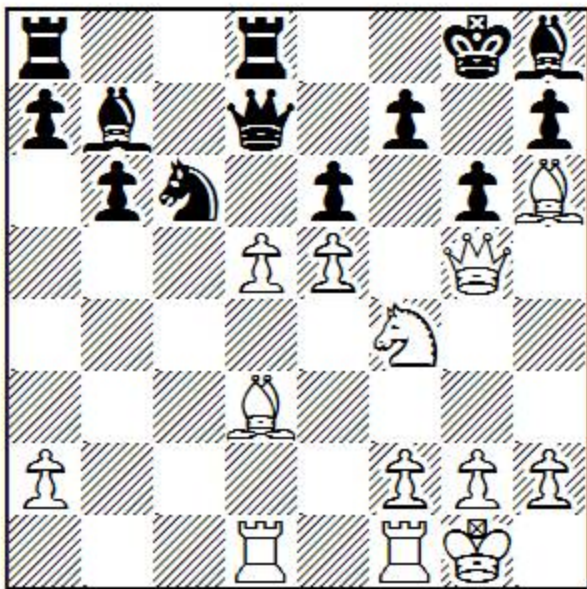
However, after the move in the game White also has powerful pressure. But it is on such micro-nuances that the result of a game usually depends ...

18 ... Nc6 19 d5!

A typical breakthrough. 'The simple 19 Bb5 would have been very strong. After 19 ... a6 it is true that 20 Nh5 does not work because of 20 ... f6!, when Black easily defends, but after 20 Bxc6 Qxc6 21 f3 the

threat of Nh5-f6 forces Black to play ... f7-f5. After the possible 21 ... Rd7 22 Nh5 f5 23 Nf4, in view of h2-h4-h5 Black has a difficult position.' (Korchnoi). Say, 23 ... Qc4 24 h4 Kf7 25 h5 Rg8 26 hxc6+ (26 a3!? Rxd4? 27 Rc1!, when both 27 ... Qa4 28 Rc7+ Rd7 29 Bg7!! and 27 ... Qb5 28 Bf8!! or 28 hxc6+ hxc6 29 Bg7!! are bad for Black) 26 ... hxc6 27 Qh4 Rxd4 28 Bf8!! or 27 ... Qxa2 28 Bg5 with a terribly strong attack.

However, in the event of 21 ... Qc2! 22 Qe7! (22 h4 Qf5) 22 ... Bd5! 23 Rc1 Qa4 24 Rc7 Qxd4+ 25 Kh1 Rf8 26 Nxd5 Qxd5 27 Bxf8 Rxf8 28 f4 Qxa2 White's advantage might not be sufficient for a win.



19 ... exd5

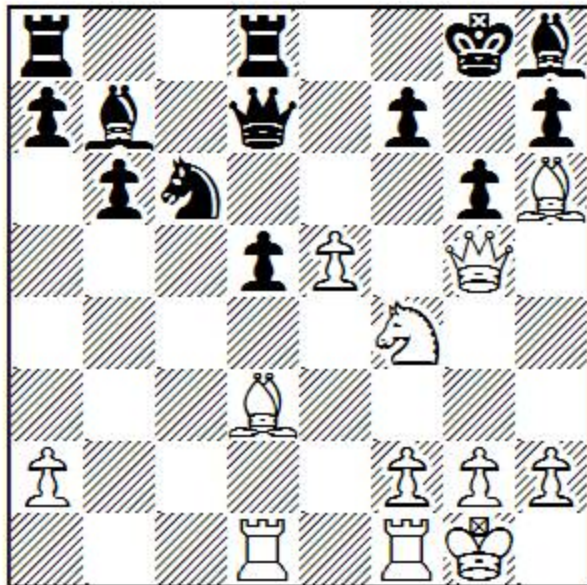
After 19 ... Nxe5 (19 ... Bxe5? 20 dxc6) 20 dxe6 Qc7! (Korchnoi) the decisive role would be played by White's mobile passed pawn. He has more than one way of developing his initiative:

1) 21 Rfe1 Nxd3 22 e7! Re8 23 Rxd3 Rac8 24 h4, or 21 ... f6 22 Qg3 Bg7 23 Bxg7 Qxg7 24 Bb5 Rxd1 25 Rxd1 Qe7 26 Bd7 Rd8 27 Qc3 Nxd7 28 Qc7 Bc6 29 h3!! (V.Belov) 29 ... Kg7 (29 ... Kf8 30 Rd6! g5 31 Ne2! or 29 ... Qe8 30 Nd5! Kg7 31 Qxc6 Ne5 32 Qc7+ Kh6 33 f4 Nc6 34 Nxf6! etc. is no better for Black) 30 Rd6! Rc8 31 Rxc6 Rxc7 32 Rxc7 Kf8 33 Rc8+! Kg7 34 exd7 Qxd7 35 Rc7! with a very pretty win;

2) 21 Bf5 Rxd1?! 22 Rxd1 Re8 (22 ... f6 23 Qg3 Bg7 24 Nxd6! hxd6 25 Rd7!) 23 h4! Bf3 24 Rd7! or 21 ... f6 22 Qg3 Bg7 (22 ... Qe7? 23 Bxd6! 23 Bxd6 Qxd6 24 Bc2 Qe7 25 Bb3 with an enduring advantage;

3) 21 Bb5 f6 22 Qg3 Qe7 (22 ... a6 23 Bd7 or 22 ... Bg7 23 Bxd6 Qxd6 24 Qa3! is also bad for Black) 23 Rd7! Nxd7 24 exd7 (threatening Nxd6) 24 ... Bg7 25 Qb3+ Kh8 26 Bxd7+ Kxd7 27 Ne6+ Kh8 28 Nxd8 Rxd8 29 Qc3! (with the threat of Re1) 29 ... Qd6 (29 ... Qe5 30 Qxe5 fxe5 31 f4! e4 32 Rc1 and Rc7 is also hopeless) 30 Re1 Kg7 31 Qe3 and wins.

Of course, such a prospect did not appeal to Korchnoi, and he preferred to eliminate the dangerous pawn.



20 Bb5?

At first sight, the most natural move: both 21 Nxd5 and 21 e6 fxe6 22 Nxd6 are threatened. However, the bishop is diverted from the kingside, and therefore other ways should have been sought:

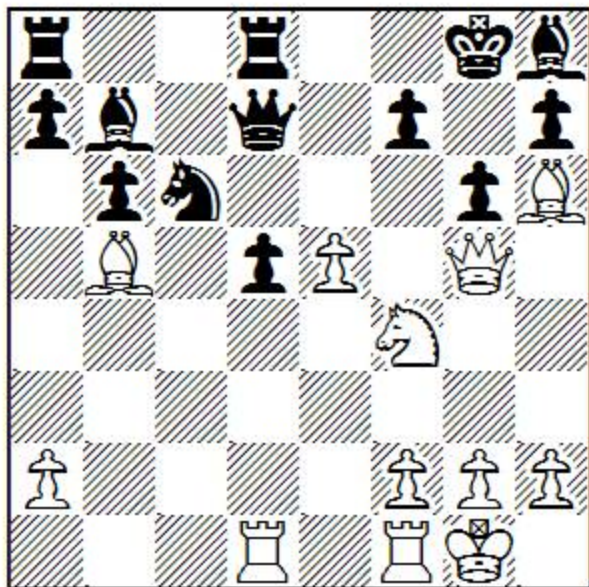
1) 20 Nh5 Qe7 (20 ... Qe6 21 f4) 21 Nf6+ Bxf6 22 exf6 Qe5 23 Qh4! Re8 (23 ... Qh5 24 Qxh5 gxh5 25 f4! is also insufficient) 24 Bg5 h5 25 Bf4 Qe6 (25 ... Qb2 26 Bxd6!) 26 Qg5, or 24 ... Nd4 25 Qh6 Ne6 26 f4! Qe3+ 27 Kh1 (with the threat of Re1 and Rxe6) 27 ... Qc5 28 f5 Qf8 29 fxe6 Qxh6 30 exf7+ Kxf7 31 Bxh6 and wins;

2) 20 e6 Qe7 21 exf7+ Qxf7 22 Nxc6! (Korchnoi suggested 22 Rfe1, but 22 ... Ne5! parries the attack: 23 Rxe5 Bf6 24 Rf5 Bxg5 25 Rxf7 Bxh6 26 Rxb7 Bxf4 with a roughly equal endgame) 22 ... hxc6 23 Bxc6 Qe7. Because of this move Korchnoi considered the knight sacrifice to be premature, but after 24 Qh5! White has a very strong attack: he is threatening Rfe1, and Rd3-g3, and the advance of the f-pawn. For example:

a) 24 ... Be5?! 25 f4 Bd4+ 26 Rxd4 Nxd4 27 Bg5 Qg7 28 f5 or 27 ... Ne2+ 28 Kh1 Nxf4 29 Bxf4 Rf8 30 h3! d4 (30 ... Qg7 31 Rf3) 31 Bc2! and wins;

b) 24 ... Ne5 25 f4 Nxc6 26 Qxc6+ Bg7 27 Rfe1 Rd6 28 Qxc7+ Qxc7 29 Bxc7, and White's three connected passed pawns should decide the outcome in his favour.

The question suggests itself: does this mean that Black's entire strategy was incorrect? Objectively, yes. However, it must be borne in mind that this game was played at the dawn of the Grünfeld Defence's development, and a complicated, little-studied position had arisen. The consequences of the piece sacrifice no doubt seemed far from obvious to Filip (this was still in the pre-Tal era!) and, with the aim of clarifying the situation as soon as possible, he chose a quieter continuation, which seemed like the optimal solution to the problem.



20 ... Bxe5!!

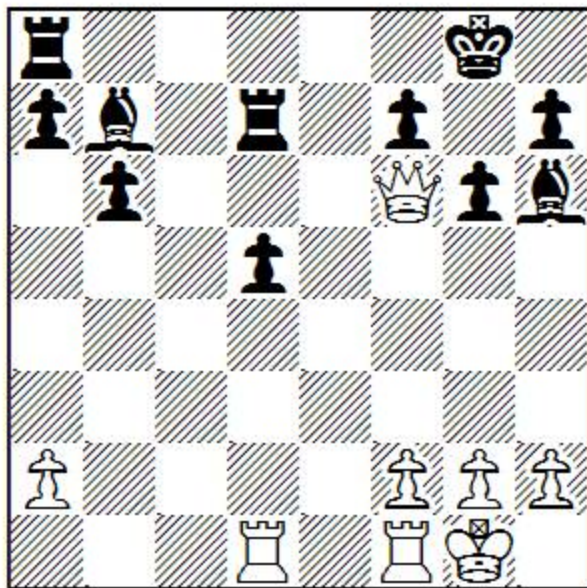
You don't have to be a Tal, in order after 20 ... d4? 21 e6 Qe7 22 exf7+ Qxf7 to calculate the combinative blow 23 Bc4! Qxc4 24 Nxg6 and wins. But you have to be a Korchnoi, in order to find 20 ... Bxe5!! This looks like a blunder, but in fact it is a quite paradoxical queen sacrifice.

21 Bxc6 (21 Nxd5 Qxd5 22 Bxc6 Bxh2+! or 22 Rxd5 Rxd5 23 Bxc6 Bxh2+! is unfavourable for White) 21 ... Bxf4 22 Qf6

Mate is threatened, and the queen is hanging – many players with Black, on seeing this position from afar, would simply have stopped their calculations. But Korchnoi subtly appreciated that the sacrifice of his queen for two bishops and two pawns gives good counter-chances.

22 ... Bxh6 23 Bxd7 Rxd7

'Black's compensation for the queen is rather slight, but the character of the position has changed. Instead of an attack on the king, White is faced with solving difficult problems.' (Korchnoi). Indeed, it is hard for his rooks to invade the enemy position (the bishops prevent this), and most important – they are restricted by the passed d-pawn. Moreover, in blockading this pawn, a rook will come under attack by one of the bishops.



24 Rfe1 Bf8!

Preventing Re7: any exchange is to White's advantage, since the power of the queen is sharply increased. A similar situation occurred in

a game of mine with Karpov (3rd matchgame, New York 1990), where I sacrificed my queen for two minor pieces and a pawn: my opponent also had to exchange pieces, even at the cost of material ...

25 h4?!

Routinely played, but with the dark-squared bishop on the board the attack with h2-h4-h5 has no point. 25 Rd3 with the threat of Rde3-e8 was correct, when Black, to prevent the exchange of rooks, would have to play 25 ... Bb4!? (Korchnoi). It is clear that White's chances are better; the question is how much.

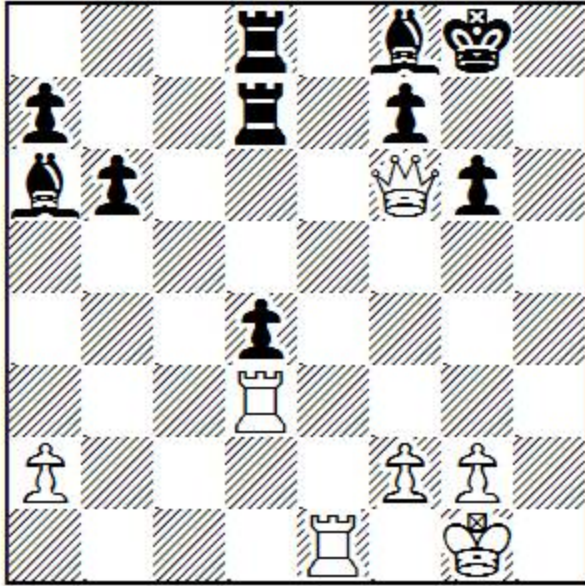
25 ... Rad8 26 h5?!

Had Filip looked a little into the future, he would have realised that the pawn should be immediately blockaded by 26 Rd4!, since after 26 ... Bg7 27 Qf4 the immediate exchange 27 ... Bxd4 28 Qxd4 is dangerous for Black in view of the weakening of his king's defences. However, the cool-headed 27 ... h5 would have maintained an unclear position. To exploit the power of his queen, White would have had to play g2-g4, and this is a rather committing decision.

But through inertia Filip made the 'attacking' move 26 h5?! A typical situation when a player, after gaining an advantage, did not find the correct plan and allowed his opponent to change the direction of the play with the help of an unexpected sacrifice. Such turning points are normally unsettling, and in such a state it is not easy to find the strongest moves. This is the main danger when facing players such as Korchnoi, who sense such psychological nuances very keenly and do not miss an opportunity to launch a counterattack.

26 ... d4 (after this move White now has to play accurately to keep the balance) **27 hxg6 hxg6 28 Rd3 Ba6**

It is not just that Black has succeeded in advancing his passed pawn – now, in the event of the exchange of rook for bishop, he will retain his dark-squared bishop, which apart from anything else is performing the important role of defending his king.



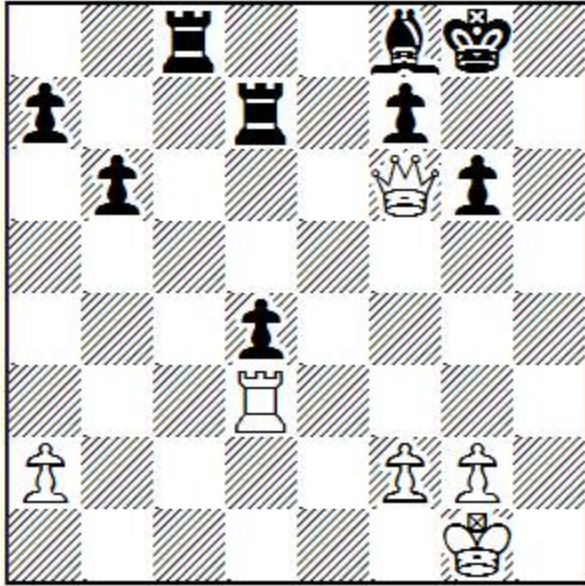
29 Red1?

With time-trouble approaching, Filip completely loses the thread of the game and gives up the exchange. According to Korchnoi, White could have drawn without difficulty by 29 Rh3 Bg7 30 Qc6 (or 30 Qh4 d3 – you can't frighten Korchnoi with a single check on h7!) 30 ... d3 31 Re8+ Rxe8 32 Qxd7 Bb5! 33 Qxb5 Re1+ 34 Kh2 d2 35 Rd3 d1Q 36 Rxd1 Rxd1 37 Qa6 Rd5 38 Qxa7 Ra5 and ... Rxa2.

29 ... Bxd3 30 Rxd3

'A position has been reached with a minimal advantage for Black. The end of the game took place in a severe time scramble, and I managed to outwit my opponent.' (Korchnoi)

30 ... Rc8

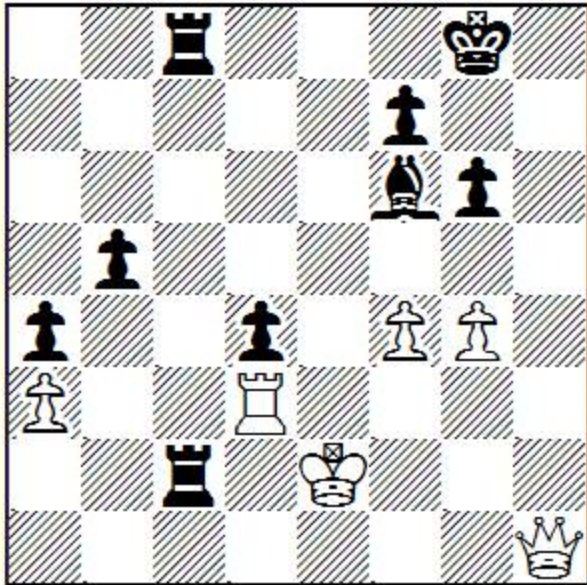


Black has excellent material compensation for the queen – rook, bishop, a couple of pawns and a well-fortified king. His plan includes creating another passed pawn on the queenside. Even so, this may not be sufficient for a win. It is not our objective to ascertain the exact evaluation of this endgame, but it is interesting to observe the energy and resourcefulness with which Korchnoi conducts the technical stage of the game.

31 Qf3

Perhaps the best practical chance of saving the game was to go into a rook ending a pawn down – 31 Rxd4 Bg7 32 Qxg7+ Kxg7 33 Rxd7 (Korchnoi), although after 33 ... Rc1+ 34 Kh2 a5 it is hard for White to exchange his a-pawn for the b-pawn and Black most probably has a technically won position.

31 ... Bg7 32 Qe4 Rcd8 33 f4 Rd5 34 g4 Bf6 35 Kg2 Kf8 36 Kf3 b5 37 Qe1 Kg8 38 Qb4 R8d7 39 Qb3?! a5 40 a3 Rc5 41 Qb1 Rdc7 42 Ke2 a4 43 Qh1 R7c6 44 Qb1 Rc8 45 Qh1 Rc2+



46 Rd2

After 46 Kf3 there is a choice between the sharp 46 ... b4 47 axb4 a3, and if 48 Rxa3, then 48 ... R2c3+ 49 Rxc3 dxc3 (Korchnoi), and the quiet 46 ... Rc1.

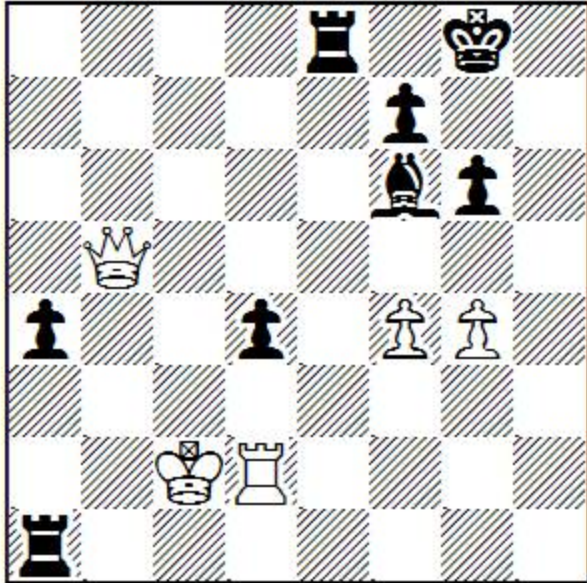
46 ... Re8+ 47 Kd1 Rc3 48 Qd5

'48 g5 was more tenacious. In this case the attempt by Black to win at once by 48 ... d3? would not have worked: 49 gxf6 Rxa3 50 Ra2 Rxa2 51 Qh6 and it is White who wins.' (Korchnoi). But after 48 ... Rxa3 Black would have retained a decisive advantage.

48 ... Rxa3 49 Qxb5

Hanging over White, like a sword of Damocles, is the threat of ... d4-d3: 49 g5 d3! or 49 Qc6 Ra1+ 50 Kc2 d3+! etc.

49 ... Ra1+ 50 Kc2



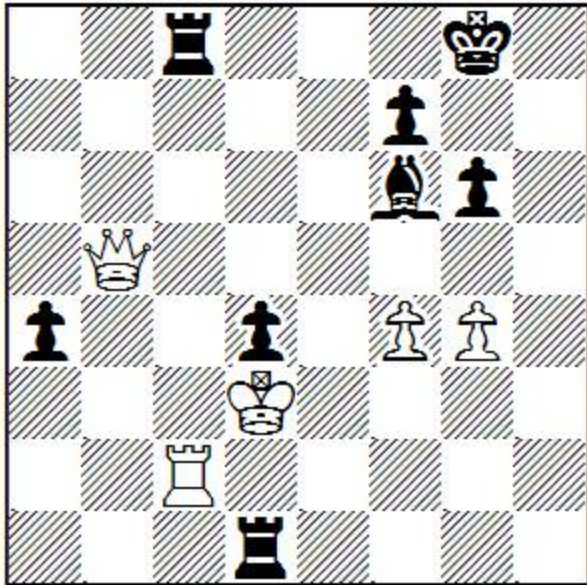
50 ... Rc8+

According to Korchnoi, 50 ... Re3 was simpler, with the threat of 51 ... d3+ 52 Rxd3 Re2+, for example: 51 Qd5 Rc3+ 52 Kb2 d3, or 51 Qb8+ Kg7 52 g5 d3+ 53 Rxd3 Re2+ 54 Rd2 Ra2+ 55 Kc1 Bb2+! 56 Rxb2 Raxb2, and further resistance is pointless.

51 Kd3 Re1 (51 ... a3! was winning) 52 Rc2?! (52 Ra2 really was better)

52 ... Rd1+

52 ... Rxc2 53 Kxc2 a3 followed by ... a3-a2 would also have won.



53 Ke2?

A blunder, but Korchnoi's recommendation of 53 Rd2 Rc3+ 54 Ke2 would also not have helped in view of 54 ... Rh1! with the decisive threat of 55 ... Re3+ 56 Kf2 Rh2+.

53 ... d3+ 54 Kxd1 dxc2+ 55 Kc1 a3 56 Qa6 Bb2+ 0-1

Going into the final round the two main rivals were level, and here Viktor was helped by his compatriot Furman, who defeated Nezhmetdinov. This decided the outcome of the tournament: 1. Korchnoi – 13 out of 17; 2. Nezhmetdinov – 12½; 3-4. Filip and Kholmov – 11, etc.

At that time the qualifying rules were severe: although he was a silver medal winner in the national championship and a newly-fledged international master, to reach the next, 22nd USSR Championship (a world championship Zonal!) he again had to overcome the semi-final barrier. In the first round of the final (Moscow 1955), Korchnoi encountered problems with Black against Simagin in his favourite Grünfeld Defence, conducted a difficult defence, and then analysed the adjourned position for two days, but on the resumption he was unable to save it. For a long time this painful defeat left Viktor in a state of psychological shock. The outcome was 19th place, last but one ...

However, soon he showed that this was an accidental failure. First he was successful in the next USSR Championship semi-final – in

these tournaments Korchnoi's play was uncommonly stable: eight years in a row he took one of the qualifying places (twice finishing first). Then for the first time he became Leningrad Champion (17 out of 19), shared victory with Olafsson in the traditional Hastings tournament (1955/56) and performed worthily in the 23rd USSR Championship: 1-3. Averbakh, Spassky and Taimanov – 11½ out of 17; 4. Korchnoi – 11; 5-7. Kholmov, Polugayevsky and Tal – 10½, etc.

After finally gaining the grandmaster title, Viktor took something of a respite: in the next three championships of the country he occupied modest places in the middle of the tournament table. However, with striking wins in individual games he as though warned the chess world: the day is not far off when the genie will escape from the bottle!

In previous volumes I have already talked about the Zonal USSR Championship of 1958, which brought a brilliant triumph for Tal and a bitter disappointment for Spassky. But even on the threshold of his finest hour the 'Riga magician' was unable to solve the Korchnoi problem, losing to him in the middle of the tournament. Incidentally, after this setback Tal finished with 8 out of 9(!).

It is well known that, for Tal, Korchnoi was the most difficult and awkward opponent – the only player in the world against whom, after becoming champion and even ex-champion of the world, he had not won a single game, while losing five with five draws! For many years afterwards too, the character of their chess relations did not change. Before their Candidates semi-final match in 1968 the score in their decisive games was 9-1 in Korchnoi's favour, and after the match it became 11-2. And only towards the end of their rivalry, in the mid-1980s, did Tal manage to improve slightly on this catastrophic balance.

It was probably Korchnoi's 'crooked' style that did not allow Tal to dictate matters in games with him, as when playing other opponents. Tal liked to sacrifice and seize the initiative, but this did not bother Korchnoi: he happily took 'everything that was going', defended tenaciously, and at the first opportunity launched a counterattack. And the main thing – he did not lose his head in the face of Tal's fierce onslaught! The game between them from that Championship, despite the mutual mistakes and inaccuracies, is very typical of the rivalry between Tal and Korchnoi in the 1950s-1960s. It was a fierce clash of two diametrically opposed chess conceptions – attacking and defensive.

Game 3

M.Tal-V.Korchnoi

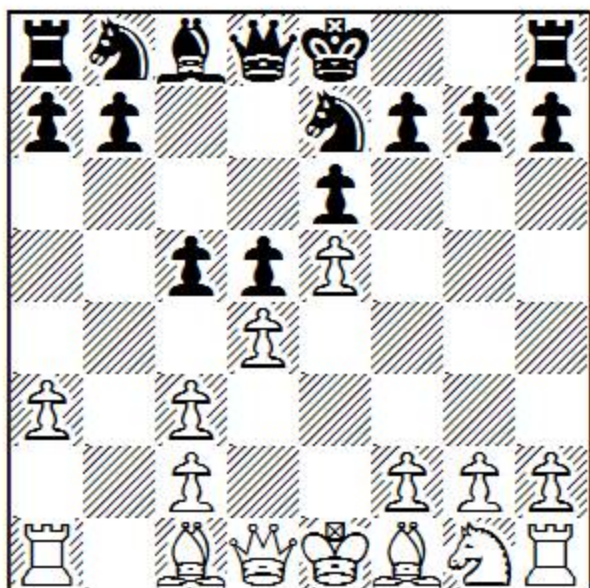
25th USSR Championship, Riga 1958, 9th round

French Defence C18

1 e4 e6

Korchnoi's favourite reply to 1 e4, to which he retains a devotion even today. Many of his brilliant tournament and match victories are associated with the French Defence.

2 d4 d5 3 Nc3 (3 Nd2 – *Game Nos.13, 52 and 53*) 3 ... Bb4 4 e5 c5 5 a3 Bxc3+ 6 bxc3 Ne7



Botvinnik's favourite plan. Korchnoi, who picked up and developed his ideas, very successfully handled this complicated and unbalanced position, where there is a basic conflict: White has the two bishops and a powerful centre, but on the other hand he has chronic weaknesses on the queenside, which are obvious targets for Black's counterplay. At that time such double-edged schemes were an ideal weapon for a player with a counterattacking style.

7 Qg4 (7 a4 – *Game Nos.12, 22 and 23*) 7 ... Nf5

Later Korchnoi played only 7 ... Qc7 or 7 ... cxd4 (*Game Nos.14 and 27*), as well as 7 ... 0-0! By his own admission, he employed the

knight move 'only once in my life – with the aim of catching Tal in a prepared variation.' And he caught him!

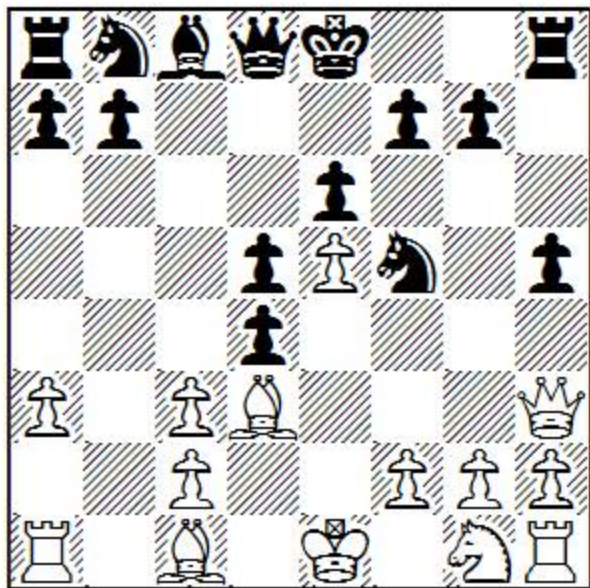
8 Bd3 h5 9 Qh3

It stands to reason that Tal repeats the game that he won against Petrosian (24th USSR Championship, Moscow 1957), although he had also employed 9 Qf4! (against Erepova, Riga 1953). In that case he may not have liked the exchange of queens after 9 ... Qh4 (the current fashion is for 9 ... Qc7!?) 10 Ne2 Qxf4 11 Nxf4 Ne7 (Bisguier-Fine, New York 1948). Here White has somewhat the better endgame, but as Korchnoi wrote many years ago, 'evidently this positional continuation is not at all to the taste of the temperamental Tal.'

It is curious how tastes change: the later Tal preferred to go into this endgame against Petrosian (50th USSR Championship, Moscow 1983), although he was unable to realise the advantages of his position ... For more details about 9 Qf4!, see the game Stein-Petrosian, brilliantly won by White (*Volume 3, Game No.56*). However, 9 Qh3 does not yet spoil anything.

9 ... cxd4

The critical position of the variation.



10 Nf3?!

But this is too devil-may-care! White's chances are mainly associated with disclosing the weakness of the dark squares in the

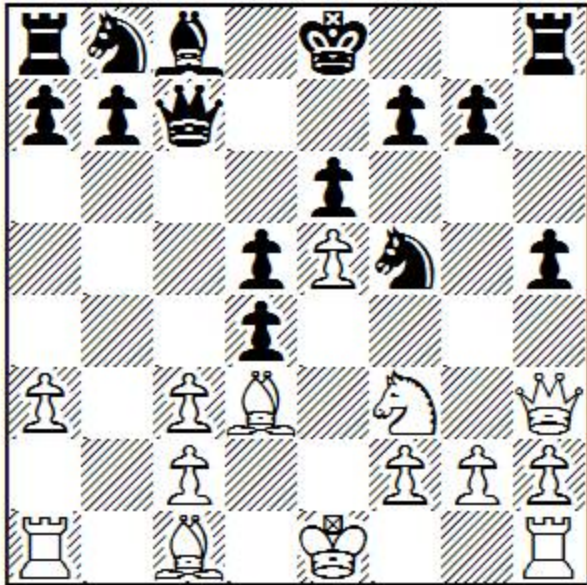
opponent's position, for example: 10 Ne2 dxc3 11 Bxf5 exf5 12 Qg3, or immediately 10 Bxf5 exf5 11 cxd4 (if 11 Qg3 Euwe suggested 11 ... Be6 12 Qxg7?! Kd7 and ... Rg8; 11 ... g6 12 cxd4 Nc6 13 Nf3(e2) h4! and 14 ... h3 is also not so clear) 11 ... Nc6 12 Ne2 Qa5+ 13 Bd2 Qb5 14 Qe3, and Black still has to solve the problem of evacuating his king.

Instead of this White initiates play on both flanks, in particular planning the aggressive g2-g4. But in the process his king is deprived of a secure shelter and Black acquires excellent counter-chances. The young Tal believed implicitly in his lucky star, which Korchnoi exploited, demonstrating a subtle understanding of his opponent's psychology. After all, in the majority of positions you must make objectively the best moves, and not those that correspond to your style or frame of mind. Especially if the latter are obviously expected by your opponent!

10 ... Qc7!

An important improvement – a gain of tempo. In the previous year's USSR Championship Tal had breached the defences of 'iron Tigran' after 10 ... Nc6?! 11 g4 Nfe7 12 gxh5! Qc7 (12 ... Qa5!?) 13 Bf4 Ng6 14 Qg4 Nxf4 15 Qxf4 dxc3 16 Qg5! etc. Alternatively 10 ... dxc3 11 g4 Ne7 12 gxh5 is no better for Black, while if 10 ... Qa5 there would probably have followed 11 Rb1 (11 0-0!?) 11 ... Qxc3+ (11 ... dxc3 12 g4) 12 Bd2 Qxa3 13 g4 (the positional 13 0-0 with the idea 14 Bxf5 exf5 15 Qg3 is again good) 13 ... Ne7 14 gxh5 (14 Nxd4 a6 is less clear) followed by Rg1 – such positions with active rooks and an enduring initiative very much appealed to Tal.

From c7 the queen both attacks the enemy pawns (c3 and in particular e5) and also prophylactically defends the b7-pawn in anticipation of ... Nbc6, ... Bd7 and ... 0-0-0. However, in fact neither side manages to castle – another indication of the high intensity of the struggle that prevailed in this game.



11 Rb1 (11 0-0 did not fit in with the planned g2-g4) **11 ... dxc3**

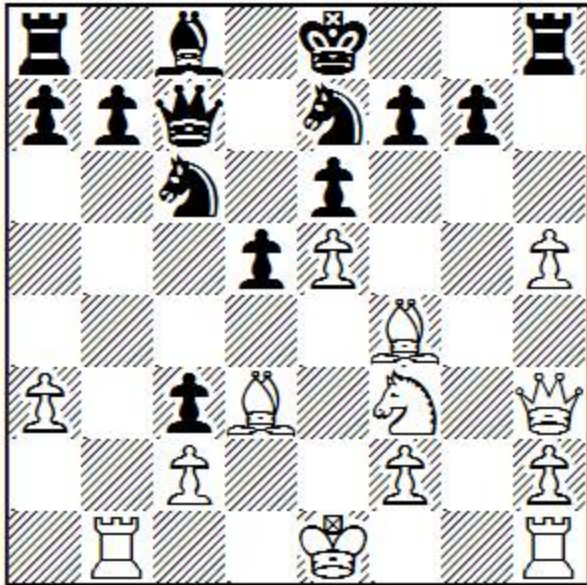
There was no great point in playing 11 ... Qxc3+ 12 Bd2 and g2-g4 (as after 10 ... Qa5). However, 11 ... Nc6!? was also acceptable: 12 g4 Nfe7 13 cxd4 Nxd4 14 Nxd4 Qc3+ 15 Bd2 Qxd4 16 f4 (Konstantinopolsky-Ivashin, correspondence 1948) 16 ... Bd7 with an unclear game.

12 g4 Ne7 13 gxh5

This may become a dangerous passed pawn if White, by creating pressure on the g-file, is able to capture on g7 or force ... g7-g6. But Black requires only two more moves to castle queenside, his pieces are compactly placed, and he has a material advantage and counterplay against the e5-pawn.

13 ... Nbc6 14 Bf4

Apparently the best move. 'This position is reached in his book by Keres, who judges it to be in White's favour, since, in his opinion, the g7-pawn is bound to be lost. The present game shows that the situation is highly double-edged,' writes Korchnoi, who refutes 14 Qg3?! Rxh5 15 Qxg7 Nxe5 16 Ng5 Nxd3+ 17 cxd3 Ng6 18 Qg8+ Nf8 19 f4 f6, winning, and considers that 14 Kd1 (with the idea of 14 ... Nxe5 15 Qg3) comes into consideration, although, in my view, after the simple 14 ... Bd7 and ... 0-0-0 White has no real compensation for the disintegration of his centre and the insecure position of his king.



14 ... Ng6!

This resource, prepared at home, was overlooked by Keres in his analysis: Black nevertheless gets to the e5-pawn which is cramping his game. After 14 ... g6?! 15 h6 Nf5 16 0-0 Nce7 17 h7 Ng7 18 Ng5 White would have retained the initiative.

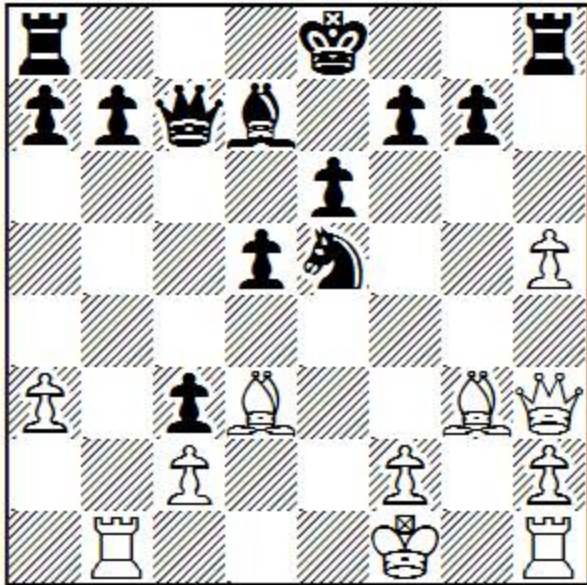
15 Bg3 (the bishop exchange 15 Bxg6 fxc6 would have signified the failure of White's plan) 15 ... Nxe5

Now, in order to justify his audacious play in the opening, Tal has to display miracles of resourcefulness.

16 Nxe5

'White incorrectly restricts his range of possibilities. It was fundamentally more correct to move the king without exchanging knights – 16 Kf1.' (Korchnoi). However, after 16 ... f6 White faces difficult problems: 17 Bb5 Bd7 18 Bxc6 (Korchnoi) 18 ... Qxc6! 19 Bxe5 0-0-0!, and 20 Bg3(d4) is not possible on account of 20 ... e5 with a decisive counterattack. Therefore Tal's move should hardly be condemned.

16 ... Nxe5 17 Kf1 (17 Kd1? Nxd3!) 17 ... Bd7 (17 ... f6?! 18 Rg1!)



18 Qh4?

'The activation of the queen is a significant mistake, which could have placed White in a difficult position. He should have played 18 Re1, and after 18 ... f6 19 Bg6+ wherever the king moves White retains the initiative.' (Korchnoi). For example: 19 ... Kd8 20 Kg2 with the threat of 21 Rxe5! fxe5 22 Re1 and Bxe5xg7, opening the way for the h-pawn.

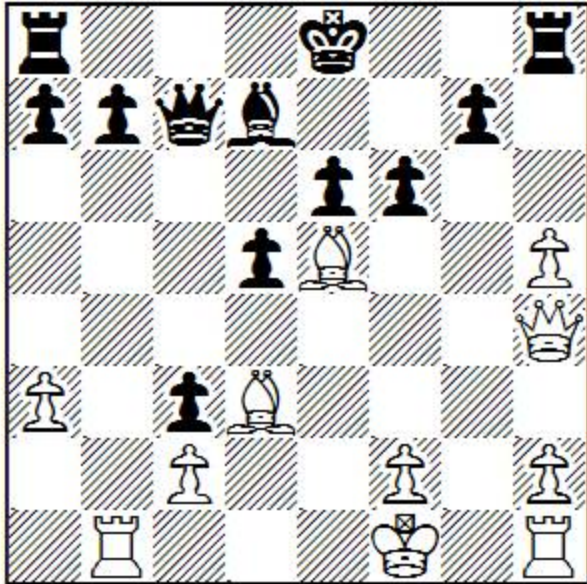
18 ... f6?

The immediate breakthrough in the centre – 18 ... d4 is also ineffective in view of 19 Rg1! (but not 19 Qxd4 Qc6 20 Be4 Qc4+ 21 Qxc4 Nxc4 22 Bxb7 Rd8) 19 ... Qc5 20 Bxe5 Qxe5 21 Rg5 Qf6 22 Rxb7 Bc6 23 Rc7 with substantial compensation for the pawn, or 19 ... Nf3 20 Bxc7 Nxe4 21 Rxe7 Bc6 22 Bf4! (again relying on the passed h-pawn) 22 ... Ke7 (22 ... Rd8 23 h6; 22 ... Nf3 23 Be2!? and Rg3) 23 Bg5+ Kf8 24 Bf6 Nf3 (24 ... Rxh5 25 Bh7!) 25 Rg3 with a double-edged endgame.

However, in Korchnoi's opinion, 'White's previous move could have been punished by the powerful tactical stroke 18 ... Nf3!, since the complications after 19 Qb4 Qc6 (19 ... e5!? – G.K.) or 19 Qg4 Nd2+ 20 Kg2(e2) e5 21 Qxg7 0-0-0 are clearly in Black's favour.' 19 h6! is stronger, retaining the tension on the kingside. Thus in the event of 19 ... g5?! 20 Qh5 (20 Qg4!?) 20 ... Nd2+ 21 Kg2 Qc6 (21 ... Qc5 22 Rxb7) 22 Bb5 Qc8 23 Qxg5 White's attack fully compensates for his

material deficit. But after 19 ... Nxb4! 20 hxb4 0-0-0! 21 gxb4 Q Rxh8 22 Bxc7 Kxc7 Black has two pawns for the exchange and the better ending.

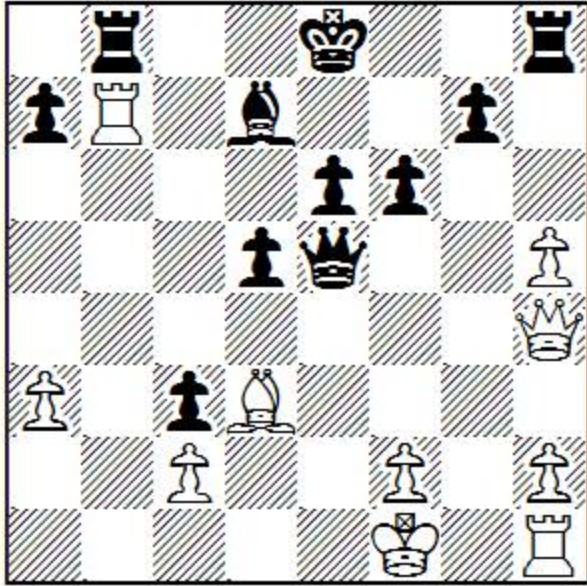
19 Bxe5! (now Tal's bold idea proves justified)



19 ... Qxe5

After 19 ... fxe5 20 Bg6+ Kf8 21 Qb4+ Kg8 22 Qxb7 (Korchnoi) White has a comfortable game: it is not clear how Black can bring his h8-rook into play (if 22 ... Qc6, then 23 Rg1).

20 Rxb7 Rb8! (exchanging the menacing rook on the 7th rank; 20 ... g5? 21 Qb4!)

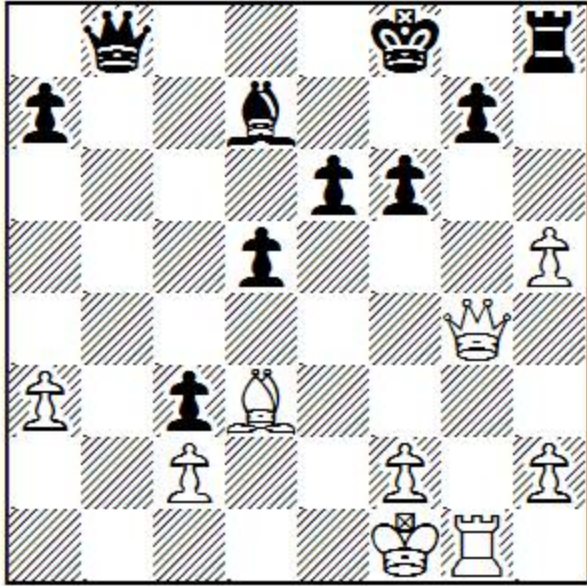


21 Rxb8+

'Interposing 21 f4 came into consideration.' (Korchnoi). Then after 21 ... Qd6 22 Rxb8+ Qxb8 23 Qg4 it is no longer good to play 23 ... Kf8? 24 Rg1, but 23 ... f5! 24 Qg5 (24 Qxg7? Qxf4+ 25 Kg2 Qh6 and wins) 24 ... Bb5! is possible, with advantage to Black.

21 ... Qxb8 22 Qg4 (after 22 Rg1?! Korchnoi was intending 22 ... g5, but 22 ... Bb5 is also strong) 22 ... Kf8 23 Rg1

Continuing to build up threats, which look rather dangerous: Black has not yet coordinated his pieces.



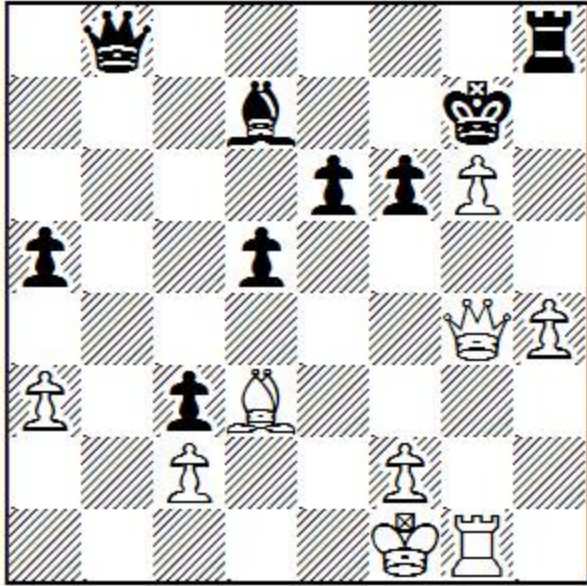
23 ... g5!

‘The only defence, but quite sufficient. Black returns the last of the sacrificed pawns, but his king finds a comfortable shelter at g7.’ (Korchnoi)

24 hxg6!

I do not think that ‘it was more correct to go into a roughly equal endgame’ – 24 h4 Qf4 25 hxg5 Qxg4 26 Rxc4 (Korchnoi), since after 26 ... e5! White would have faced a difficult struggle for a draw: 27 Rg3 Rxc4 28 gxf6 Rh3!, or 27 Rb4 Rxc4 28 Rb8+ Ke7 29 Rb7 Kd6 30 gxf6 e4 31 Be2 Rh7, and if 32 Bg4, then 32 ... d4 33 Bxd7 d3! and Black wins.

24 ... Kg7 25 h4 a5



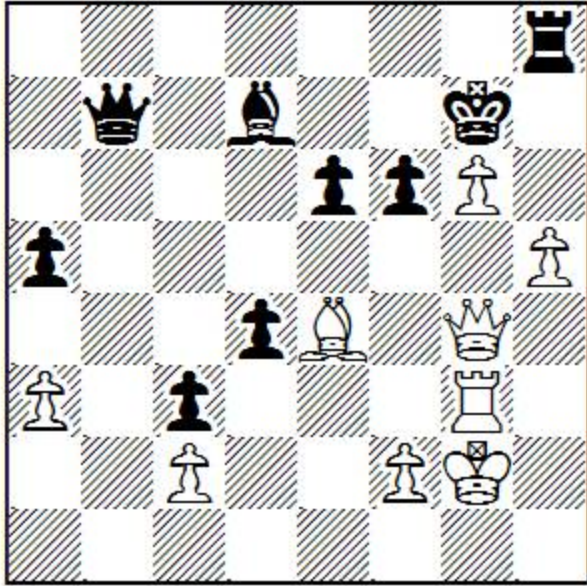
‘A useful prophylactic move, preventing a possible invasion of the white queen into Black’s position via b4. Generally speaking, Black must now watch carefully, to safeguard his rear against the penetration of the white queen.’ (Korchnoi). 25 ... Qd6 or 25 ... Qb7 is also worth studying.

26 Rg3 Qb1+ 27 Kg2

If 27 Ke2 Black was planning 27 ... Bb5 with the exchange of bishops, although after 28 Bxb5 Qxb5+ 29 Kf3 both sides have chances. More would appear to be promised by 27 ... Qb7!? with the idea of ... e6-e5.

27 ... Qb7 28 h5 d4+ (also after 28 ... e5 29 Bf5 d4+ 30 Kh2 the position is roughly equal) 29 Be4

According to Korchnoi, 29 f3 Qd5 30 Rh3 e5 31 Bf5 Bxf5 32 Qxf5 d3! is bad for White, although 33 cxd3 c2 34 Rh1 leads to a draw, for example: 34 ... Qd4 35 Rc1 Qb2 36 h6+! Rxh6 37 Qd7+ with perpetual check.

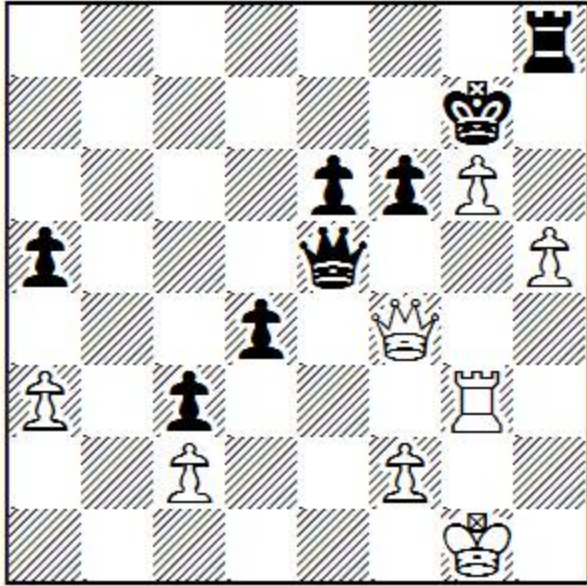


29 ... Bc6

Korchnoi called this move a mistake, suggesting that 29 ... Qb5 30 Rh3 Qg5 31 Qxg5 fxc5 would have led to a 'complicated rook and bishop ending with considerable difficulties for White.' But after 32 Rh1! and Rb1 his chances are even somewhat better.

Thus, starting from the 19th move, attack and defence have balanced each other and the most logical outcome would have been a draw. But Tal, as often happened with him after a favourable turn of events, was no longer thinking just of maintaining equality, but of winning! And he overstepped the mark ...

30 Bxc6 Qxc6+ 31 Kg1 Qd5 32 Qf4 Qe5



33 h6+??

In time-trouble Tal imagined that he saw a 'winning combination', which has a simple refutation. He could have drawn by 33 Qf3! Qd5 34 Qf4 (or 34 Qxd5 exd5) 34 ... Qe5 35 Qf3 with a repetition of moves.

33 ... Rxh6 34 Qxh6+ Kxh6 35 g7 Qxg3+ 0-1

A dramatic game!

Their duel in the next national championship had a similar outcome. Korchnoi again had Black and this time he outwitted his opponent in a Sicilian Defence, employing the Najdorf Variation. He again withstood that intense pressure, which proved unbearable for many other opponents of the young Tal. This is how Viktor Vasiliev characterised the two chess antipodes:

'Korchnoi's style is Tal's style, as though turned inside out. Tal always strives to seize the initiative, whereas Korchnoi is ready to concede it without regret. Tal likes to attack, Korchnoi to defend. Tal plays especially confidently with White, Korchnoi with Black. Tal himself, half-jokingly, half-seriously, calls his constant failures a protracted case of "Korchnoi-fear", but the reason probably lies elsewhere. Apparently, Korchnoi's counterattacking style with its inexhaustible defensive resources and tenacious striving to upset the balance enables him to steadfastly withstand Tal's attacks.'

We should not forget that at that time the Riga grandmaster was accomplishing a magical surge to the chess summit and was practically irresistible. Korchnoi alone was able successfully to withstand the new star, and this fact gives some impression as to the strength of his play at the end of the 1950s.

After the 25th USSR Championship Mikhail Yudovich tried to give a more concrete evaluation of his style: 'Korchnoi's play is characterised by bold experiments, distinctive positional evaluation, and an original treatment of strategic problems, especially his resourcefulness and tenacity in the defence of difficult positions. Korchnoi did not achieve any great competitive successes in the tournament, on account of a certain "slovenliness" in the technical stage of the game, and also because his originality in the handling of certain opening variations was sometimes transformed into affectation, conflicting with the demands of the position. Korchnoi is a player of great potential, and he should strive to ensure that his creative bursts do not come into conflict with the rigid practice of tournament play. There is no doubt that he should also try and get rid of his customary time-troubles.'

I don't know whether Viktor Lvovich read these lines, but very soon, despite his 'customary' time-troubles, his results sharply improved ...

First Gold

The peak of the early period of Korchnoi's career came in the 27th USSR Championship (Leningrad, January-February 1960), where he finally won the first of his four gold medals. Players of the older generation remember the incredible intensity of the struggle in the Soviet Championships and the star-studded fields, with which few international tournaments could compare. The title of USSR Champion was highly valued: for many years it was a kind of admission to the elite of world chess.

Playing in his native city, Viktor was initially rather nervous and found it difficult to get into his best form: he lost to Lutikov, shared the point with Taimanov, defeated Sakharov in his patent counterattacking style (again the Najdorf Variation in the Sicilian Defence!), then Nei and Smyslov, but lost to Simagin – and after six rounds he was a point behind the leader Petrosian.

The turning point came in an uncommonly dramatic and intriguing game with Leonid Shamkovich. The 'miracle' that occurred in it seems to be straightforward luck, but, knowing the essence of Korchnoi's play,

his very approach to chess, one can find not a mystical, but a fully rational explanation of the events that occurred in the nervy atmosphere during play. This is what Tal and his second Koblents wrote about this game:

‘It is quite clear: to be a devoted “fan” of Korchnoi, in particular you need iron nerves and a heart of steel. These qualities were especially needed by the Leningrad public, when their favourite met the Moscow master Shamkovich. After stunning the grandmaster in the opening with an interesting pawn sacrifice, Shamkovich quickly seized the initiative, and soon the storm clouds were gathering over the black position. Korchnoi, as usual, was resisting desperately, but the Muscovite already had his opponent in a “full nelson”. The arbiters were ready to register the moment when the grandmaster’s shoulders touched the mat ...’

Game 4

L.Shamkovich-V.Korchnoi

27th USSR Championship, Leningrad 1960, 7th round

Nimzo-Indian Defence E25

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e6

This avoidance of the Grünfeld Defence was possibly provoked by a fear of some prepared variation by the opponent – a prominent theoretician, known for his deep and unusual approach to the solving of opening problems. However, in his ‘reserve paths’ Korchnoi goes, so to speak, from the frying pan into the fire.

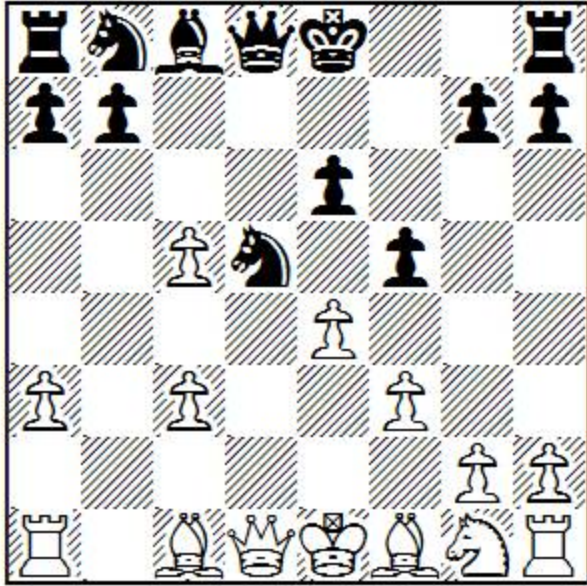
3 Nc3 Bb4 4 a3 (the aggressive Sämisch Variation) **4 ... Bxc3+ 5 bxc3 c5 6 f3!?** (6 e3 is examined in the previous volumes)

6 ... d5 7 cxd5 Nxd5 8 dxc5 f5

8 ... Qa5 9 e4 Nf6 or **9 ... Ne7(c7)** is solid, as played by Smyslov, but not **9 ... Qxc3+?! 10 Bd2 Qe5 11 Ne2** with the initiative for White (Korchnoi-Bykov, Leningrad 1957).

9 e4!?

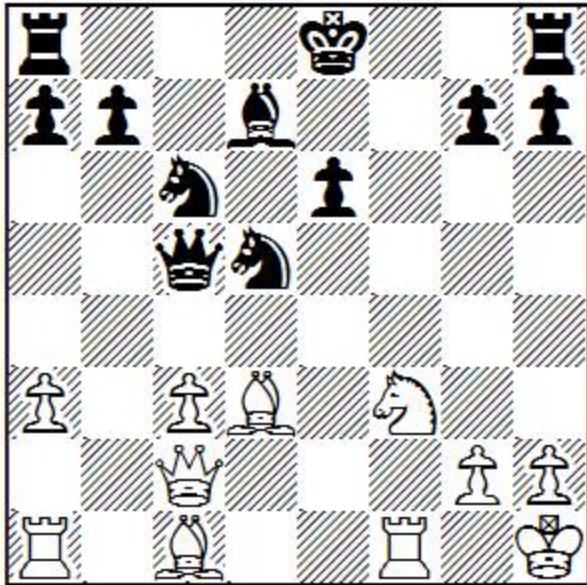
‘An unexpected novelty, which apparently unsettled Korchnoi.’ (Tal)



9 ... fxe4 10 Qc2 exf3?

This gives White an overwhelming lead in development. Tal's recommendation 10 ... e3! is correct (Furman-Polugayevsky, 31st USSR Championship, Leningrad 1963).

11 Nxf3 Qa5 12 Bd3 Nc6 13 0-0 Qxc5+ 14 Kh1 Bd7 (14 ... Qxc3 15 Qb1! with the murderous threat of Bb2)



15 Ng5!

Switching the knight to e4 with gain of tempo and at the same time preventing queenside castling (in view of Nf7). If 15 Bg5, then 15 ... Nde7 and ... 0-0-0.

15 ... Ne5 16 Ne4 Qc7 17 Bg5 Rf8

It is hard to offer Black any good advice: 17 ... Ne7 18 Rae1 will not do, nor will 17 ... Nxd3 18 Qxd3 (threatening c3-c4) 18 ... b5 19 Qf3 Bc6 20 Rae1 and wins.

18 c4! Ne7 19 c5! (at the cost of only a single pawn White has gained a decisive attack) **19 ... Bc6**

A rare occurrence in Korchnoi's games: by the 19th move he is already in a hopeless position. A spectacular rout would have followed after 19 ... Nc8 20 Rxf8+ Kxf8 21 Rf1+ Nf7 (21 ... Kg8 22 Nf6+!) 22 Qf2 Be8 23 Nf6!!

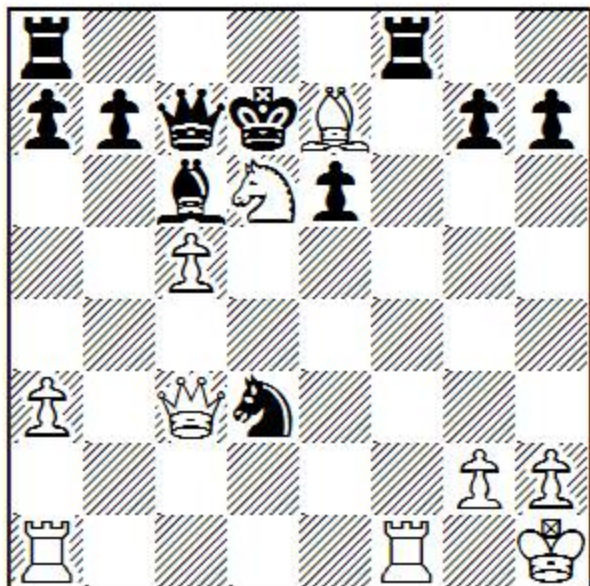
20 Nd6+ Kd7 21 Qc3?!

After a series of strong, energetic moves, Shamkovich begins to weaken. 21 Bxe7! Kxe7 22 Qc3 was immediately decisive. Had Korchnoi lost this game, it is doubtful whether in the end he would have been victorious in that USSR Championship ...

21 ... Nxd3 22 Bxe7

22 Qxg7 Rxf1+ 23 Rxf1 Bd5 24 Bxe7 Kc6 25 Rb1! would also have retained a powerful attack. White judged that 22 Bxe7 was also good,

but here miracles begin to occur.



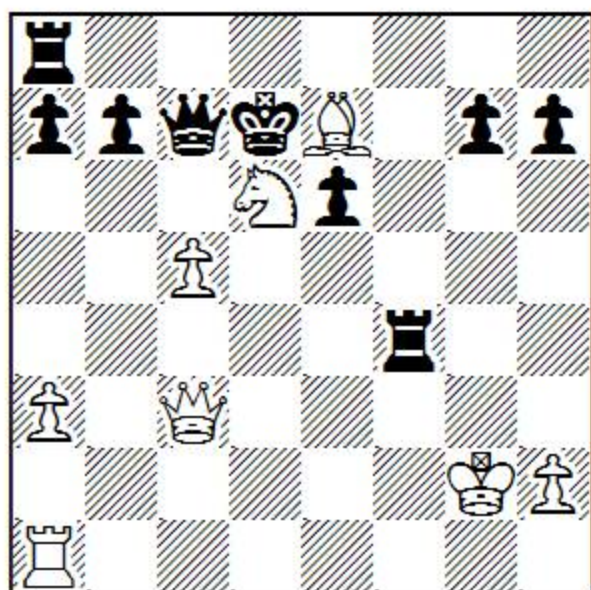
Shamkovich must have indulged in a pleasant calculation of variations such as 22 ... Rf2 23 Rxf2 Nxf2+ 24 Kg1 Bd5 (24 ... Rg8 25 Rf1) 25 Bg5! (25 Qxg7 Nh3+! 26 gxh3 Qxc5+ 27 Kf1 Rg8! 28 Qxg8 Kxe7 or 26 Kf1 Rg8! 27 Qxg8 Bc4+ 28 Nxc4 Qf4+ 29 Ke1 Qf2+ 30 Kd1 Qd4+ leads only to a draw) 25 ... Ng4 26 Qxg7+ Kc6 27 Qd4 Qa5 28 Bd2 Qxc5 29 Rc1, or 25 ... Ne4 26 Nxe4 Bxe4 27 Qxg7+ Kc6 28 Qd4 Bc2 29 Rc1 e5 30 Qc4, and the curtain comes down.

So, in order to at least prolong the resistance, something extraordinary is demanded of Black ...

22 ... Bxg2+!

A surprise! Black's position remains lost, but Korchnoi does not miss an opportunity to land an unpleasant blow, forcing his opponent to again solve some not altogether clear problems, at a moment when mentally he had already chalked up the point in the tournament table.

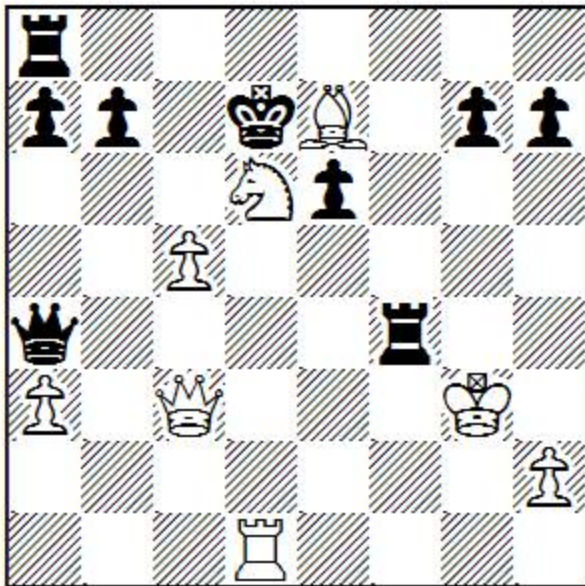
23 Kxg2 Nf4+ 24 Rxf4 (forced) 24 ... Rxf4



25 Rd1

The most natural, human reply: mobilisation with the threat of a discovered check (in particular, Nb5+). But perhaps it would have been simpler to play 25 Qd2!? Rg4+ (25 ... Qc6+ 26 Ne4+!) 26 Kh3 Qxc5 27 Nxb7+ Qd4 28 Rd1 Kxe7 29 Qxd4 Rxd4 30 Rxd4 with a won endgame, or the more aggressive 27 Kxg4 Kxe7 28 Rf1! with a won middlegame.

25 ... Qc6+ 26 Kg3 Qa4!



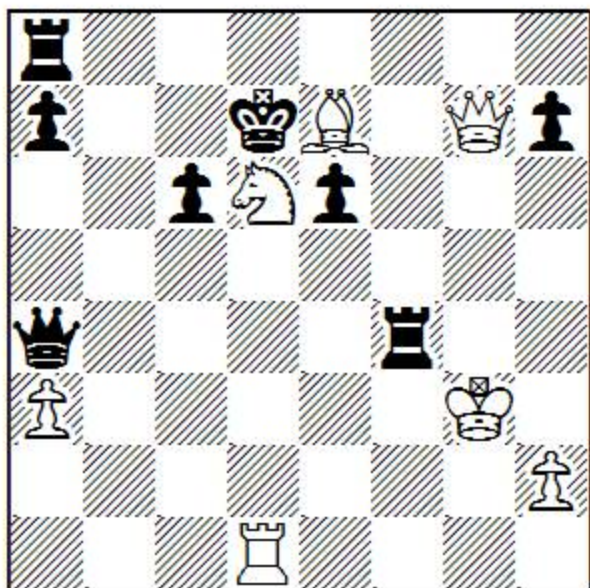
The only possibility of continuing the struggle and of again creating some threats: both ... Rg4+ and ... Qxd1, and in some cases ... Kxe7. It is now White who has to make great efforts, to find what is probably the only clear-cut winning continuation. But in such a situation it is very difficult to avoid losing your head and to switch to the calculation of sharp variations, in which, to develop a winning attack, you have to make a temporary sacrifice of material.

27 c6+?

An impulsive time-trouble move – a pawn sacrifice, dictated by the desire to deprive the enemy king of the c6-square, after which the invasion of the queen at g7 looks fatal for Black (the immediate 27 Qxg7 encounters the same drawing mechanism: 27 ... Rf3+! 28 Kxf3 Qxd1+). But this is an optical illusion! In addition, the knight at d6 is deprived of its support ...

Meanwhile, 27 Rb1! (Tal) would have been decisive: 27 ... Rg4+ 28 Kh3 Kxe7 29 Qf3! – it was necessary to see this terribly strong move, creating irresistible threats. Black has nothing better than 29 ... Rh4+ 30 Kg3 Rg4+ 31 Qxg4 Qxa3+ (it is slightly more tenacious to transpose into a lost endgame – 31 ... Qxg4+ 32 Kxg4 b6 33 Ne4 etc.) 32 Kh4 Qxc5 33 Qxg7+ Kxd6 34 Rd1+, and to avoid mate he has to give up his queen.

27 ... bxc6 28 Qxg7



The attempt to correct the faulty idea by 28 Qb2?! did not work in view of 28 ... e5! 29 Qb7+? Ke6 30 Qxa8 Qxa3+ with mate, or 29 Rd2(d3) Ke6! with an obvious advantage to Black.

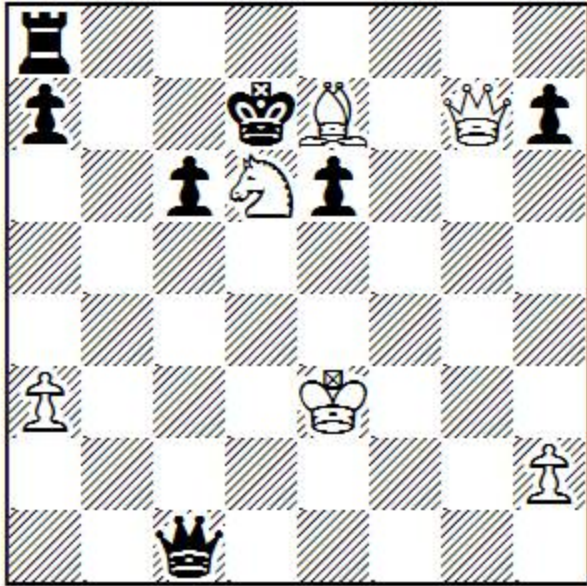
28 ... Rf3+!

Shamkovich overlooked this clever counter-stroke. Now he suddenly finds himself in the position of having to save the game.

29 Kxf3 Qxd1+ 30 Ke3 Qc1+!?

A probing check: where will the king go to? Black is already playing with the draw in hand: 30 ... Qb3+ 31 Kd2 Qa2+ 32 Kc1! Qxa3+ 33 Kc2 Qa4+ 34 Kc1. Some winning chances were promised by 31 ... c5!, but here White is rescued by a surprising 'aerial' construction – 32 Nb7! (32 Bg5+ Kc6!) 32 ... Qd5+ (32 ... Qxb7 33 Bxc5+ Kc6 34 Qg2+) 33 Ke1 Kc6 (33 ... Qe4+ 34 Kf1! Qf3+ 35 Ke1, or 34 ... Qh1+ 35 Kf2 Qxh2+ 36 Ke3 with a draw) 34 Bxc5!, and Black is unable to break up

this construction: 34 ... Rb8 35 Na5+ Kb5 36 Bb4, or 34 ... Qh1+ 35 Kd2 Qxh2+ 36 Kc3 Rc8! (an ambush) 37 a4! Qh3+ 38 Kd2, maintaining the balance.



31 Kd3?

A final oversight. 31 Kf3 was essential, when Black has nothing better than 31 ... Qd1+ 32 Ke3 Qb3+ 33 Kd2 c5! (cf. the note to Black's 30th move). Now it all ends prosaically.

31 ... Qb1+ 32 Ke3 Qg6! (now White suffers decisive loss of material) 33 Qb2 Kxe7 34 Qb7+ Kxd6 35 Qxa8 Qg1+, and in this queen endgame with two extra pawns Black won without difficulty.

After this, catching the wind of fortune in his sails, Korchnoi scored a further three successive wins – over Gufeld, Liberzon and Polugayevsky. However, his main rivals also sharply accelerated: Petrosian was level with him (both had 7½ out of 10), and Geller and Bronstein were a point behind.

'The tournament began at a rather sluggish tempo,' Bronstein wrote immediately afterwards. 'Not seeing any brilliant combinations, not finding grounds for excitement, the spectators were exclaiming: "It's boring without Tal!" But suddenly it all changed. A worthy replacement for Tal was found – Korchnoi, a player of exceptional talent and distinctive style. His fighting, uncompromising play undoubtedly had a positive influence on the entire tournament fight.'

In the words of Tal and Koblents, 'at the start of the second half of the tournament everyone wondered whether Korchnoi would be able to continue his winning run – after all, his opponent in the 10th round was the hitherto undefeated Polugayevsky.'

This game became a classic of the Grünfeld Defence, finding its way into all the opening books. It turned out to be unusually sharp, and in this complicated, non-standard struggle Korchnoi simply proved stronger and showed himself in his full glory: when specific, calculating play began, his famous counterattack went into operation. It was under the influence of this game that, half a century later, I took up the Grünfeld Defence, including the variation with 7 ... Na6.

Game 5

L.Polugayevsky-V.Korchnoi

27th USSR Championship, Leningrad 1960, 10th round

Grünfeld Defence D97

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 d5 4 Nf3 Bg7 5 Qb3 dxc4 6 Qxc4 0-0 7 e4 Na6

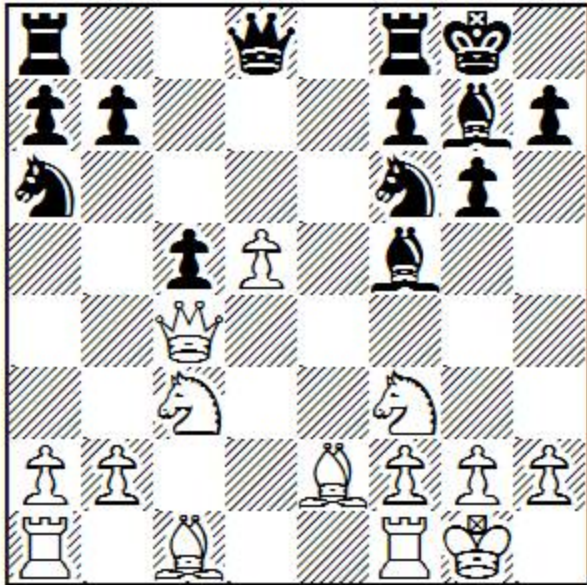
'In the mid-20th century this move was rarely employed. Therefore, in playing it I was counting on the slight novelty effect.' (Korchnoi). And indeed, at that time they mainly played the Smyslov Variation – 7 ... Bg4 8 Be3 Nfd7 (cf. *Volume 2*).

8 Be2

Or 8 Bf4 c5, as in my games with Topalov (Sarajevo 1999) and Piket (Wijk aan Zee 2000).

8 ... c5 9 d5 e6 10 0-0 exd5 11 exd5 Bf5

The standard reply, leading to a *tabiya* from the second half of the 1980s and the 1990s. Nowadays the unusual move 11 ... Nb4 is also popular, with the idea of 12 Rd1 b6, exploiting the position of the knight at b4.



12 a3

Preventing the invasion of the black knight at b4. But this is a slow plan (theory was then making only its first, timid steps), and it is better for White simply to complete his development. In his world championship matches against me Karpov played 12 Bf4 or 12 Rd1 (as did later Piket and Anand), while Timman and Khalifman went 12 Be3. For details – see Volume 7.

Incidentally, Korchnoi evaluates the diagram position in favour of White, reckoning that ‘thanks to his strong central pawn he should have an advantage, although Polugayevsky was not able to demonstrate this, nor were Kasparov’s many opponents.’ Nevertheless, I came to realise that Black does indeed face difficult problems. Thus in my game with Piket (Amsterdam 1995) I was unable to restrain the advance of the passed d-pawn. And I realised that in our era it is really too dangerous to play such complicated, strategically risky set-ups after a lengthy interval, relying only on residual impressions from many years earlier.

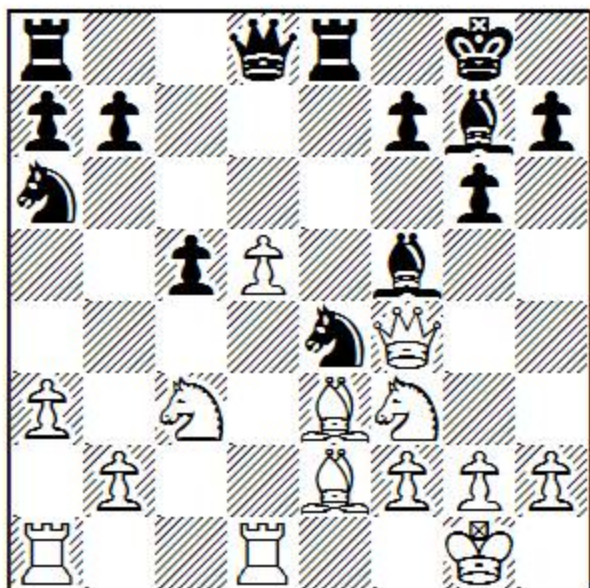
12 ... Re8 13 Rd1 (13 Bf4 Ne4 14 Nb5!? is sharper – Bronstein) **13 ... Ne4** (13 ... Qb6 is also good) **14 Be3 Nd6!?**

Black again had many possibilities, but he played in the most creative way.

15 Qf4 (15 Qb3 Nc7 with equality) **15 ... Ne4?!**

Back again! 'White did not foresee this move, of course. It looks illogical, but it creates a mass of threats! In particular, 16 ... Nxc3 17 bxc3 Re4.' (Korchnoi)

It is curious how the assessment of the knight leap has changed: Tal generously awarded it two exclamation marks, Korchnoi and other commentators gave it one, but in Korchnoi's recent book *My Best Games* (Olms, 2001) there is altogether no mark. I go further: the move, although unexpected, is objectively dubious ...



16 Nb5?!

16 Bxa6 bxa6 17 Na4 Qa5 18 Nxc5 Nxc5 19 b4 Qd8! etc. is advantageous to Black.

After a long think Polugayevsky sacrifices his b2-pawn, in order to create his own play, based on the strength of his d-pawn. Karpov acted in similar fashion against me in the 19th game of our 1986 match.

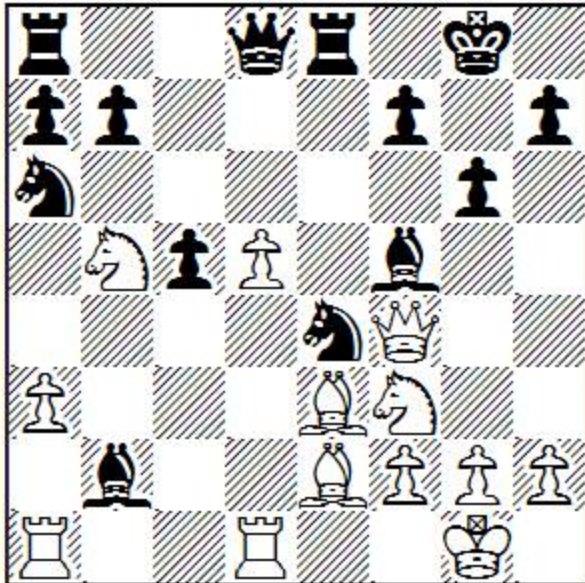
But in the given instance 16 Bd3! was better, to exploit not only the strength of the d-pawn, but also the poorly defended black king. If 16 ... Bxc3 17 bxc3 Nxc3, then 18 Qh6! Nxd1 (Korchnoi's idea of 18 ... Qf6 is dubious on account of the reply 19 Bxf5 Qxf5 20 Ng5!, or 19 ... Nxd1 20 Rxd1 Qxf5 21 Ng5 Rad8 22 Qxh7+ Kf8 23 Re1! and wins), for example:

1) 19 Rxd1 f6 (19 ... Bxd3?! 20 Ng5!) 20 Bxf5 gxf5 21 Nh4 Re5, 'and it should be possible to parry White's attack' (Korchnoi), but after

21 d6! this is not easy to do. Black should probably return the exchange – 19 ... Rxe3!? 20 fxe3 Qf8, when he does indeed parry the attack: 21 Qxf8+ Kxf8 22 Bxf5 gxf5 23 Nh4 b5 24 Nxf5 b4 25 axb4 cxb4 etc.;

2) 19 Ng5! Qxg5 (this is what Korchnoi was intending to play; if 19 ... Qf6 20 Qxh7+ Kf8 21 Rxd1 Bxd3 White has 22 Ne6+! Rxe6 23 dxe6 g5 24 Qxd3, winning) 20 Bxg5! Re1+ 21 Bf1 Bd3 22 h3!! (no one noticed this quiet move; 22 Rxd1 Rxd1 23 g4 Bxf1 24 h4 Nc7 25 Bf6 Ne8 26 Be7 Ng7 27 Bf6 Ne8 is equal) 22 ... Rxf1+ 23 Kh2 Nc7 24 Bf6 Ne8 25 Be7 with winning chances: 25 ... Nc7 26 Bxc5 Nxd5 27 Bd4 f6 28 Qd2!, or 25 ... Ng7 26 Qd2!, and the mobile white queen is stronger than the uncoordinated army of black pieces.

16 ... Bxb2



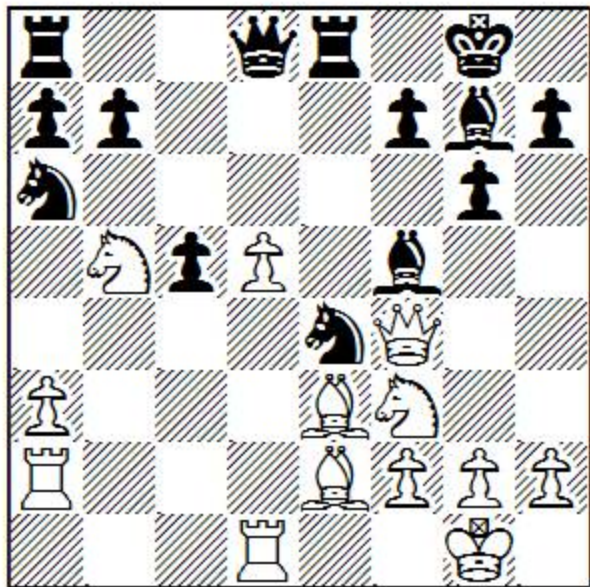
Of course! 'Korchnoi remains Korchnoi.' (Tal). He is faithful to his creative credo: always to accept sacrifices, if immediate benefits for the opponent are not apparent.

17 Ra2

A tempting continuation, but it would appear that more was promised by 17 Rab1 Bg7 18 g4 (18 d6!?) 18 ... Bd7 19 Bd3 (fighting against the knight at e4) 19 ... Bxb5 20 Bxe4 (recommended by Geller) 20 ... Nc7 21 Ng5!? Bf6 22 h4, or 20 ... Qd7 21 d6 Rxe4 (this exchange sacrifice is practically forced: 21 ... Re6 22 Bd5!) 22 Qxe4 Bc6 23 Qf4 Re8 24 h3 with a very complicated game, but the passed

d-pawn allows White to face the future with confidence. 19 ... Qf6! (Korchnoi) is safer, although after 20 Qxf6 Bxf6 21 g5 the knight at b5 and the d-pawn cramp Black's position, for the moment his extra pawn is not felt, and the position is one of dynamic balance.

17 ... Bg7



18 Bc4

Building up pressure and threatening a possible d5-d6. 'White rejected 18 d6 because of 18 ... Be6 19 Qxe4 Bxa2 20 Qxb7 Qb6! 21 Qxb6 axb6, when he has insufficient compensation for the lost material. But the bishop at c4 cuts off the queen's escape. An alternative was the unhurried but safe 18 h3!?' (Korchnoi). In this case Black could have begun tackling the knight at b5 – 18 ... Qa5! (threatening ... Nb4) 19 Nd2 c4! 20 Bxc4 Qa4, or 19 Bc4 Qa4 20 Rc1 Bd7! with a comfortable game.

18 ... Nf6!

Intending both ... Re4, and ... Nh5. What an amazingly agile knight! And what remarkable resourcefulness in a highly complicated position! It is not surprising that Polugayevsky's eyes were dazzled: there were just too many tempting continuations ...

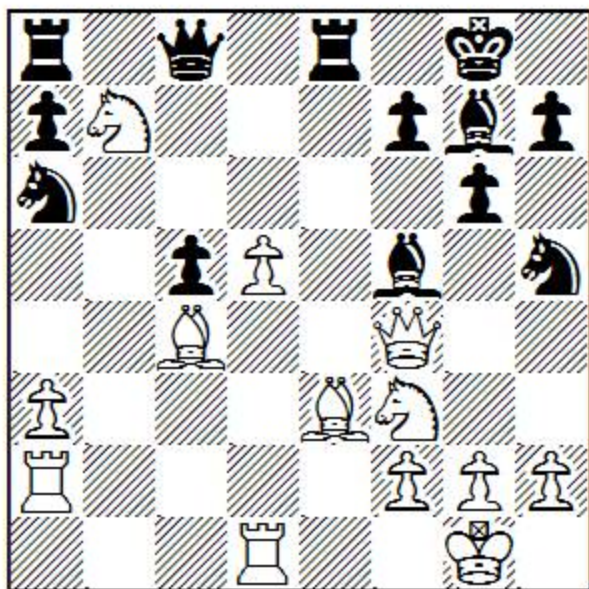
19 Nd6?!

Korchnoi condemns this move, suggesting instead 19 Qd6 or 19 Qg3 'with roughly equal chances.' However, if 19 Qd6, then 19 ... Qa5!

and ... Rad8 is strong, and if 19 Qg3 – 19 ... Re4 20 Be2 (20 Bd3? Rg4) 20 ... Nh5 21 Qd6 Bd7!, in both cases with the initiative for Black.

On the other hand, 19 Ng5!? would at least have justified the move Bc4 and maintained a complicated position: 19 ... Ng4?! 20 d6 or 19 ... Nh5?! 20 Qf3 h6 21 Nxf7 Qd7 22 d6 is dangerous for Black, and so he has to cast caution to the winds – 19 ... h6 20 Nxf7! Kxf7 21 Nd6+ Kf8 (if 21 ... Kg8 there is also 22 Nxf5) 22 Nxe8 Qxe8. Black has two pieces for a rook, but White's powerful passed pawn, to all appearances, gives him equal chances.

19 ... Nh5 20 Nxb7 Qc8



21 Qd6?

Seemingly natural, but in fact the losing move. 21 Nd6 was essential, and although after 21 ... Qb8 'White would have lost material without sufficient compensation' (Korchnoi), he had an interesting queen sacrifice – 22 Qxf5! gxf5 23 Nxe8 Qxe8 24 Bxa6 Qa4 25 Be2 with saving chances. True, by playing 25 ... c4!? or 25 ... Nf6! Black would nevertheless retain an obvious advantage.

21 ... Nb8!

A brilliant reply, quite overlooked by Polugayevsky. Now both ... Qxb7 and ... Bf8 are threatened, and it becomes clear that White is bound to lose material. His attack proves to be a mirage, whereas

Black's pieces suddenly, and as if by magic, occupy the necessary squares.

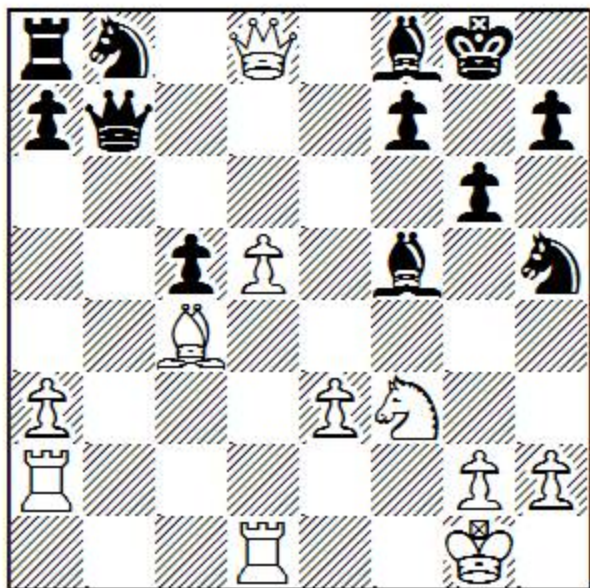
22 Bb5 (22 h3 Qxb7 23 g4 Bb1 or 23 ... Be4 and wins) **22 ... Rxe3!**

'Avoiding a clever trap: 22 ... Bf8? 23 Bxe8 Bxd6 24 Nxd6, and the picture changes sharply.' (Tal)

23 fxe3 Bf8 (the immediate 23 ... Qxb7 24 Bc6 Qb6 or 24 Qxc5 Nf6 is also possible) **24 Qd8**

It would not have helped to play 24 Qe5 Qxb7 25 Rb2?! Nd7 26 Bc6 Qc8 (26 ... Qxc6!?) 27 Qc3 Bg7 28 Qd2 Bxb2 29 Bxa8 Qxa8 30 Qxb2 Nhf6 (Korchnoi), or 25 e4 Qxb5 26 exf5 Nd7 and Black wins.

24 ... Qxb7 25 Bc4



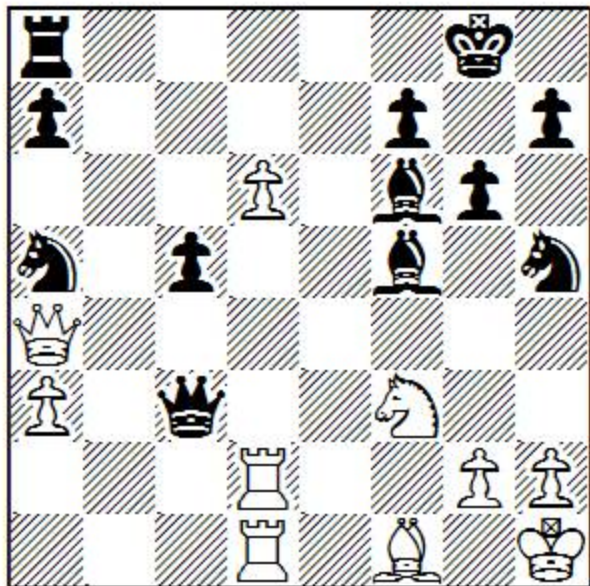
'25 Rb2 was somewhat more tenacious' (Korchnoi), although after 25 ... Nd7 White would have lost with both 26 Bc6 Qxb2 27 Qxa8 Qxa3 and 26 Bxd7 Qxb2 27 Qxa8 Bxd7.

25 ... Nc6! (more flamboyant than 25 ... Nd7) **26 Qh4** (26 dxc6 Rxd8 27 cxb7 Rxd1+ 28 Kf2 Rb1 29 Bd5 Be6 and wins) **26 ... Na5 27 Bf1 Qb3 28 Rad2 Qxe3+ 29 Kh1 Be7?**

'Already from the 25th move the two players were involved in a fierce time scramble. Here Black should have prevented the advance of the d-pawn by 29 ... Nb7!' (Korchnoi)

30 Qa4 Qc3?!

According to Korchnoi, this is 'the only defence against the threats of Re2 and Qxa5.' But perhaps 30 ... Bd8!? would have been better.
 31 d6? (31 Bd3! was more tenacious) 31 ... Bf6



32 d7

'In the variation 32 Rd3 Bxd3 33 Rxd3 Qc1 34 Rd1 Black would have won by 34 ... Qh6! It was also useful (in time-trouble!) to see the following variation: 32 g4 Qxf3+ 33 Bg2 Qxg4 34 Qxg4 Bxg4 35 Bxa8 Bxd1 36 Rxd1 Nb3!' (Korchnoi)

32 ... Rd8 33 Re2 Kg7 34 Kg1 Qb3 35 Qxb3 Nxb3 36 h3?! (36 Ne5 Nd4) 36 ... Ng3 ('again this knight has something to say,' comments Tal with a smile) 37 Re3 Nxf1 38 Rxb3 Bc2 0-1

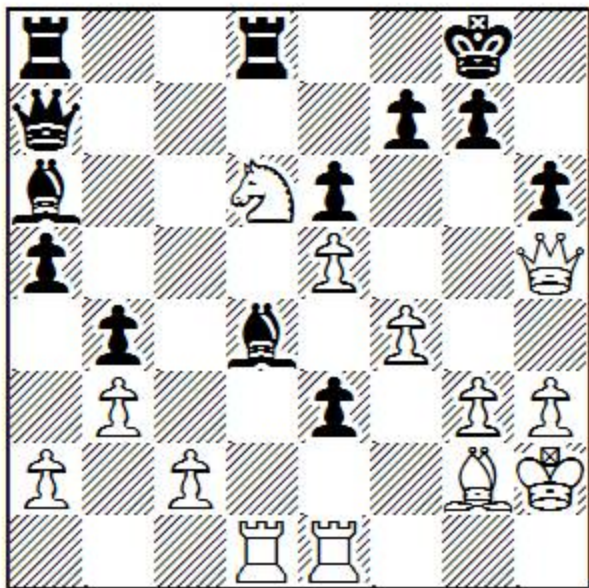
A classic example of counterattack!

Then Viktor played draws with Bronstein, Petrosian and Averbakh, and defeated Gurgienidze and Spassky. With 11 out of 15, he was leading together with Petrosian, half a point ahead of Geller. But at this moment, four rounds before the finish of this exhausting marathon, a terrible grimace of fortune awaited Korchnoi.

Game 6

V.Bagirov-V.Korchnoi

27th USSR Championship, Leningrad 1960, 16th round



26 ... Bc3 27 Bxa8?! (27 Rxe3! Qxe3 28 Nxf7! Rxd1 29 Nxb6+ would have forced a draw), and here Korchnoi, who was intending to play 27 ... Bxe1 28 Rxe1 (28 Bb7? Rxd6 29 exd6 e2! and wins) 28 ... Rxa8 29 Qf3 e2, by mistake picked up ... the bishop at a6!

‘All this happened literally in seconds,’ writes Viktor Vasiliev. ‘He removed the bishop from the board and, going pale, he froze with his hand raised. Meeting Bagirov’s glance, he whispered barely audibly “I resign”. Quickly, making an effort to stop his hand shaking, he signed the score-sheets, stood up and, not looking to either side, not seeing and not hearing anything, he left. If he had heard how the auditorium of the Leningrad Palace of Physical Culture began to groan, when the sense of what had happened reached the spectators ... He walked home, tormenting himself with one question: how could this have happened? So feebly, so ridiculously to lose half a point, or more probably a whole point – after all, Bagirov’s position was clearly worse, and in addition he was running into time-trouble. How stupid, to pick up the wrong bishop and immediately lose everything – a rook, the game, and with it hopes of the long-awaited title of USSR Champion ...’

Yes, this was a very severe blow, and after it few would have been unable to come to their senses. The position in the leading group changed: now Geller had broken half a point clear. In the next round,

taking great risks and passing close to defeat, Korchnoi managed to defeat Krogus.

‘The ridiculous blunder against Bagirov in no way troubled Korchnoi,’ wrote Tal and Koblents. ‘He possesses one of the most distinctive styles, which is not at all easy to divine. Incidentally, one of the authors of this article (it is not hard to guess which!) has not managed to find any at all appropriate key to the enigma of the Leningrad player. Possibly the game with Krogus will enable a step to be made in this direction. The opening was played very quietly ... Suddenly Korchnoi sharply changed track, and the opponent’s isolated pawn became very strong. It is probable that this plan was in principle incorrect, but it contained many pitfalls, one of which Krogus did not manage to avoid.’

However, that day his rivals also won, maintaining the status quo: Geller – 12½ out of 17, Korchnoi and Petrosian – 12.

Then came the penultimate round, the decisive encounter with Geller. ‘Yes, it is very interesting if the leaders meet at the finish, and especially if they have such an attractive style of play. This game, like a magnet, drew the attention of the entire auditorium.’ (Tal, Koblents)

It was clear that only a win (with Black!) would give Korchnoi real chances of the gold. A win over an opponent who had a reputation for being very much a ‘white’ player, and who, in addition, was in excellent form: before this game Geller had scored 9 out of 10! On this occasion he would have been satisfied with a draw, and it is hard to imagine how one could consciously play for a win with Black against a top-class grandmaster, well-known for his deep opening preparation. Nevertheless, Korchnoi was able to set his opponent difficult problems – both purely chess, and psychological, which in the end proved insoluble even for Geller.

Game 7

E.Geller-V.Korchnoi

27th USSR Championship, Leningrad 1960, 18th round

Alekhine Defence B03

1 e4 Nf6

The first surprise: White is invited to seize space and fight for an advantage, but ... in very complicated and sharp play! ‘The choice of opening more or less corresponded with my reckless mood; although

the Alekhine Defence is not totally correct, it is a fighting opening. It is no accident that it is occasionally employed by Fischer, Larsen and Hort.' (Korchnoi)

In addition, this defence had never previously occurred in any of Geller's serious games. But, knowing his innate maximalism, it could be assumed that he would try to 'punish' his opponent for his audacity, he would be drawn into the maelstrom of battle, and for a while would forget about his competitive objectives – about the fact that he needed a draw. Which is exactly what happened!

2 e5 Nd5 3 d4 d6 4 c4

Later, until the end of his career, Geller almost exclusively played 4 Nf3 (in particular, against Korchnoi, Stockholm Interzonal 1962).

4 ... Nb6 5 f4 (the most aggressive, but also the most double-edged variation) **5 ... Bf5** (5 ... dxe5 6 fxe5 c5?! – *Volume 2, Game No.60*)

6 Nc3 dxe5 7 fxe5 e6 8 Nf3 Be7

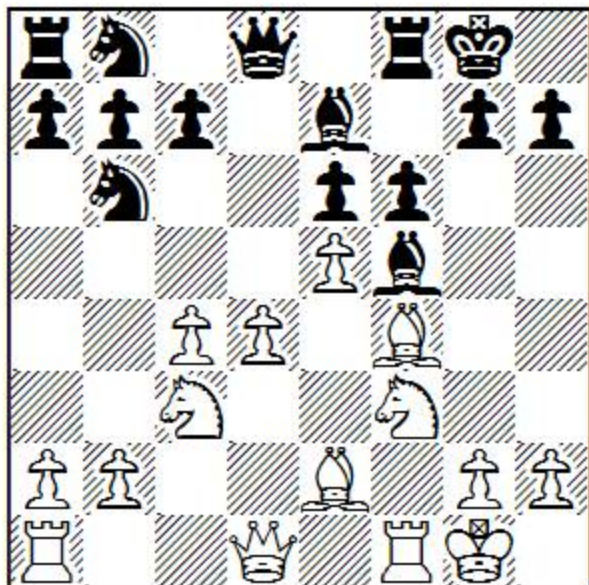
They usually play **8 ... Nc6!** **9 Be3 Bg4**, **9 ... Qd7** or, most often, **9 ... Be7 10 d5!?** with great complications, which then were judged to favour White, but are now considered acceptable for Black.

9 Be2 (as it later transpired, **9 Bd3!** is stronger) **9 ... 0-0 10 0-0 f6**

By undermining the opponent's centre, Black solves his opening problems, although White retains a certain advantage in space.

11 Bf4?!

The absence of the knight from c6 induced Geller to seek new ways, but in this set-up the bishop should defend the d4-pawn. **11 c5 Nd5 12 Nh4** is pointless in view of **12 ... Nxc3 13 bxc3 Be4**. After **11 Be3**, apart from **11 ... Nc6** Black can also play **11 ... fxe5 12 Nxe5 N8d7**. The line that perhaps corresponded best with White's tournament objective was **11 exf6 Bxf6 12 Be3 Nc6** (Black has transposed into the variation **8 ... Nc6 9 Be3 Be7**, having avoided **10 d5!?**) **13 Qd2 Qe8** (**13 ... Qe7!?**) **14 Rad1 Rd8 15 Qc1** with a minimal plus for White (Suetin-Korchnoi, 20th USSR Championship, Moscow 1952; Feldman-Korchnoi, Leningrad 1953).



Korchnoi's conclusion was unambiguous: 'So, I had some experience with it, in contrast to Geller, who knew of this position only by hearsay. My choice of opening had been correct! Now it was just a matter of playing well.'

11 ... Nc6 (immediately putting pressure on the d-pawn) 12 exf6 Bxf6 13 d5

Perhaps Geller had wanted to play 13 Nb5, but here he noticed that this was a blank shot in view of 13 ... Rf7 (or 13 ... Rc8 with the same idea of ... a7-a6) 14 d5 exd5 15 c5, and now not 15 ... Bxb2 16 cxb6! Bxa1 17 bxc7 Qe7 18 Ng5, which 'looks very dangerous for Black' (Korchnoi), but 15 ... Nc4! 16 Nxc7 Nxb2 (16 ... Ne3!?) 17 Qd2 (if 17 Qb3(xd5), then 17 ... Rc8) 17 ... d4! with very sharp play.

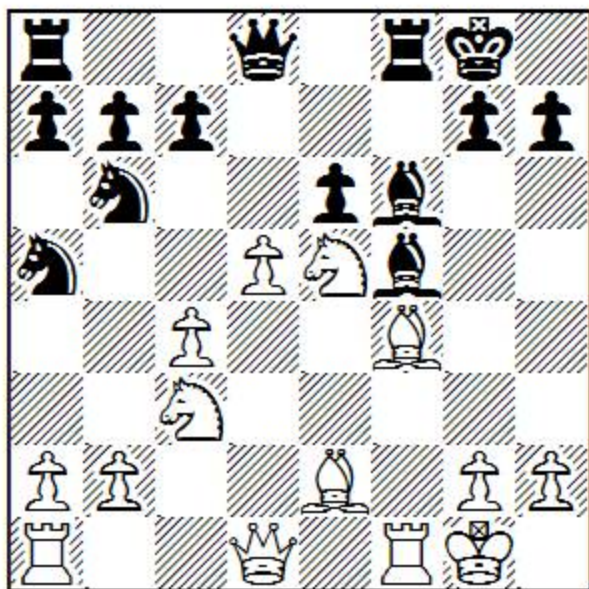
13 ... Na5

Strangely enough, White is already faced with quite unpleasant problems: his c4-pawn is hanging and the black bishops are trained on his queenside. Some important decision has to be taken ...

14 Ne5!?

'There is no doubt that initially Geller was intending to play differently – 14 d6 cxd6 15 Bxd6 for example, but he did not like 15 ... Rf7 16 c5 Nbc4, when Black's threats – ... Nxb2, ... Ne3 and ... Nxd6 – seem difficult to parry. But now the white knight ends up in a suspended state!' (Korchnoi)

But the move in the game is apparently the best. It is unfavourable for White to play 14 Nd4?! Naxc4 15 Nxe6 Bxe6 16 dxe6 Qxd1! 17 Raxd1 (17 Nxd1 Rae8) 17 ... Nxb2 18 Rc1 Rae8, or the sharper 14 Nb5 Naxc4! (Korchnoi's move 14 ... Bxb2 is unclear in view of 15 Bxc7) 15 Bxc4 (15 dxe6 Qxd1 and ... Nxb2) 15 ... Nxc4 16 Nxc7 Rc8 17 Nxe6 Bxe6 18 dxe6 Qb6+ 19 Kh1 Qxe6 etc. And aiming for a draw by 14 dxe6 Bxe6 (14 ... Naxc4 15 Bxc4 Nxc4 16 Qd5!) 15 c5 Bxc3 16 Qxd8 Raxd8 17 Bxc7! Bxb2 18 Rab1 is not at all what Geller was dreaming of, when he began the game and played 11 Bf4?!



14 ... Bxe5

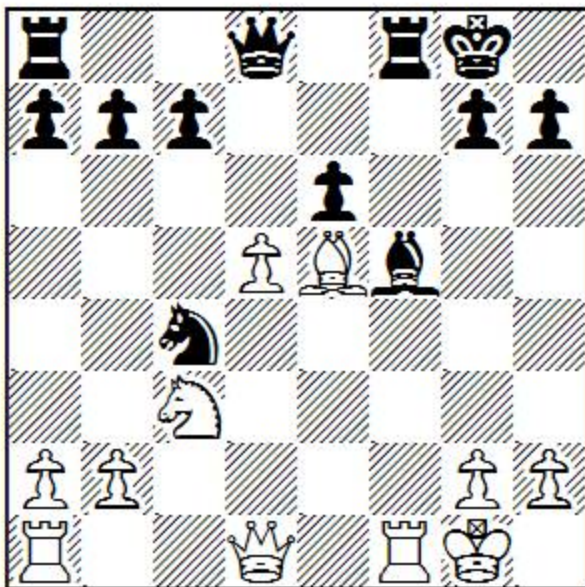
'A mistake, typical of the early period of my chess career: in striving to win material as soon as possible, I underestimated the opponent's tactical possibilities,' writes Korchnoi, recommending 14 ... Qe7!? 15 g4! (15 Qd4 Rad8! with the threat of ... Nc6) 15 ... Bxe5 16 Bxe5 exd5 (after 16 ... Naxc4 17 gxf5 Nxe5 18 fxe6 or 18 dxe6 Qg5+ 19 Kh1 Rxf5 20 Qb3 Re8 21 Nb5 the 'wedge' at e6 equalises the chances) 17 Bd4 Be6 etc., 'and Black's position is more pleasant.' 17 ... c5! is even better.

However, White too can play more strongly – 17 Bg3! Be6 18 cxd5 with counterplay for the pawn, sufficient for a draw: 18 ... Rxf1+ 19 Bxf1 Nxd5 20 Nxd5 Qc5+ 21 Bf2 Qxd5 22 Qxd5 Bxd5 23 Rd1 c6 24 b4 Nc4 25 Bxc4 Bxc4 26 Rd7 and Bd4, or 18 ... Nxd5 19 Nxd5 Qc5+ 20 Rf2

Rxf2 21 Rc1 Qxd5 22 Qxd5 Bxd5 23 Kxf2 Nc6 24 Bxc7 and Rd1, aiming for the exchange of rooks and of the light-squared bishop for the knight on c6.

From the practical point of view, 14 ... Qe7 may have been slightly more forceful, since it would not have been easy for White to find a way of disentangling his clump of pieces and deciding on the weakening 15 g4! However, this does not signify that 14 ... Bxe5 is a mistake. An impartial analysis shows that these two continuations are roughly equivalent.

15 Bxe5 Naxc4 16 Bxc4 Nxc4



17 Bxg7!

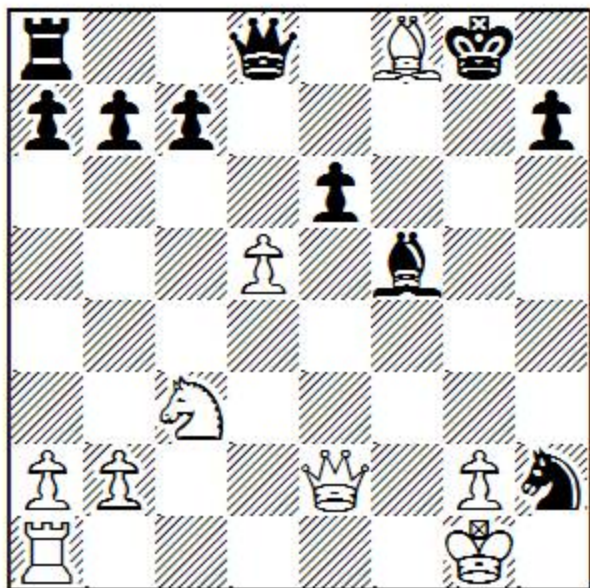
'I overlooked this move!', Korchnoi admitted. 'King safety is one of the most important factors in the middlegame. Now it is White who has the initiative, and Black has to fight for equality.' In my opinion, this is an exaggeration: Korchnoi finds a very interesting possibility of counterplay.

17 ... Ne3! (after 17 ... Kxg7 18 Qd4+ and Qxc4 White does indeed have the initiative) **18 Qe2!?**

Geller's maximalism shows itself. For achieving a draw it was safer to play 18 Qd4 Qg5 19 Rf2 Nc2! 20 Rxc2 Qxg7 with equality (Korchnoi).

18 ... Nxf1 19 Bxf8 Nxh2!

Now things are also anxious for the white king. A highly unusual position is reached, in which both kings are exposed, but Black is the first to begin giving checks, and this gives him chances of confusing his opponent.



20 Bc5

After 20 Kxh2? Qh4+ 21 Kg1 Qd4+! (21 ... Rxf8 22 Qe5! is not so clear) 22 Kh2 Rxf8 23 Rd1 (23 dxe6 Rf6 and wins – Korchnoi) 23 ... Qf4+ 24 g3 Qg4 the extra pawn should give Black a win.

And in the event of 20 dxe6 Ng4 21 e7 White would have had to balance on the edge of the abyss: 21 ... Qd6 22 Qf3 Be6 23 Ne4 Qh2+ 24 Kf1 Qe5! 25 Kg1!, or 21 ... Qd4+ 22 Kh1 Qf4 23 g3 Qxg3 24 Rf1! (after Korchnoi's move 24 Qc4+? there is the decisive 24 ... Be6! 25 Qxe6+ Kh8) 24 ... Bd7 25 Qc4+ Kh8 26 Bg7+! Kxg7 27 Qf7+ Kh6 28 Qf8+ with perpetual check.

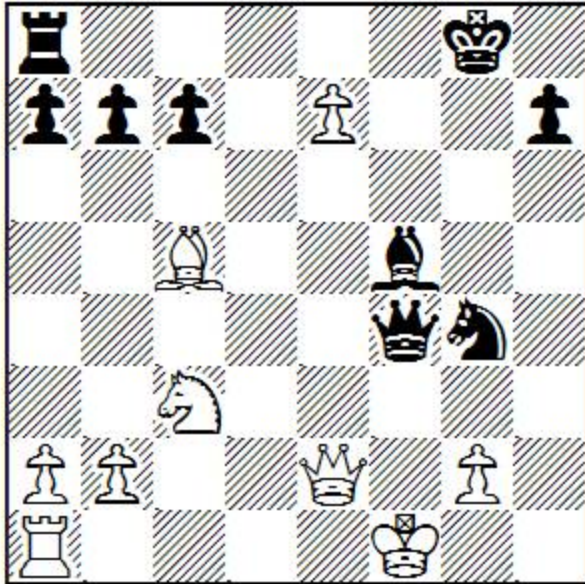
'News of the draw in the Bagirov-Petrosian game appeared to spur on the leaders: they began playing with great intensity. And the outcome was probably the most interesting game of the championship.' (Tal, Koblenz)

20 ... Ng4!

The most unpleasant reply for White. Black creates the threat of ... Qh4-h2+, which, however, is not deadly: his king is also open, and the

white pawn forces its way through to e7. 'But in the end I played the game of my life!' (Korchnoi)

21 dxe6 Qh4 22 e7 Qh2+ (but not 22 ... Re8? 23 Qc4+ Kg7 24 Qf4! Korchnoi) 23 Kf1 Qf4+



24 Kg1

Geller instinctively moves his king away from the centre, although 24 Ke1!? with the threat of Nd5 was quite safe and would have quickly led to the draw that White so desired:

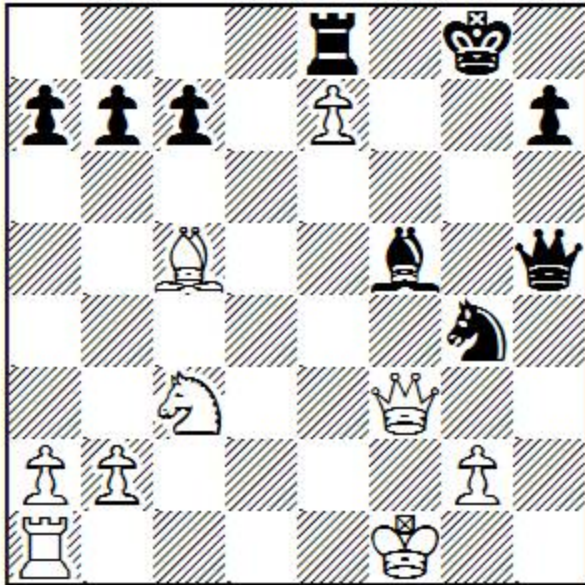
1) 24 ... Qg3+ 25 Kd1 Kf7 (Korchnoi; 25 ... Ne5!? 26 Nd5 c6 is equal) 26 Qc4+ Kg6 27 Rc1 Ne5 28 Ne2 Qd3+ 29 Qxd3 Nxd3 with a draw, or simply 25 Kd2, forcing perpetual check – 25 ... Qf4+ 26 Ke1 (26 Kd1 Nf6!, and White loses after 27 Nd5? Qa4+ 28 b3 Qd7 Korchnoi) 26 ... Qg3+;

2) 24 ... Re8 25 Nd5! Qh2! (but not 25 ... Qg3+? 26 Kd2 b6 27 Rf1! and wins – Korchnoi) 26 Nxc7 Rxe7 with inevitable perpetual check, or 26 Kd2!? Qh6+ 27 Kc3 Nf6 28 Nxc7 Ne4+ 29 Kb4 Nxc5 30 Qc4+ Be6 31 Qxc5 with a guaranteed draw.

24 ... Re8 (of course, avoiding the repetition of moves) **25 Qf3**

Now 25 Nd5? was bad on account of 25 ... Qh2+ 26 Kf1 c6! (Korchnoi).

25 ... Qh2+ 26 Kf1 Qh5!



27 Qd5+?

Played in the excitement of the struggle. After the cool-headed 27 Kg1! Black could hardly have been satisfied by 27 ... c6 28 Qf4! or 27 ... b6 28 Qd5+ Kg7 29 Bd4+ Kg6 30 Qc6+ Kf7 31 Qxc7 Rxe7 32 Qf4, and so he would have had to 'beg' for a draw by repetition – 27 ... Qh2+ 28 Kf1 Qh5! (28 ... Qh1+? 29 Ke2 Qxa1 30 Qxf5 Qxb2+ 31 Kd3 etc. is bad for him).

Korchnoi makes a valuable comment: 'In his career, Geller played and won many decisive games. When he needed to win, and his opponent was satisfied with a draw, he would calmly break down his opponent's resistance. He rarely found himself in the opposite situation – of fighting for a draw. And in this game his nerves let him down. Incidentally, similar situations also occurred with me, and I did not always emerge with honour from a difficult situation.'

27 ... Kg7 28 Qd4+?!

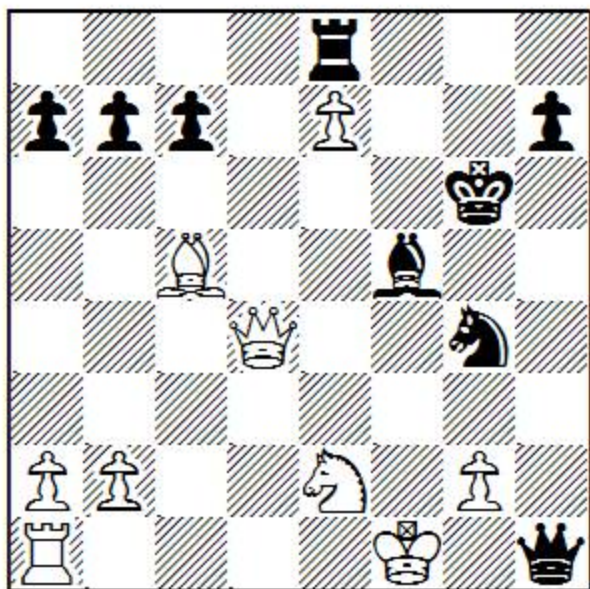
Just one error – and already it is not easy for White to coordinate his pieces. 'The developing move 28 Re1 was undoubtedly stronger, although after 28 ... Bd3+ 29 Qxd3 Qxc5 30 Qg3 h5 Black stands better, since 31 Qh4? is not possible on account of 31 ... Qc4+, when White loses his queen.' (Korchnoi). And yet by 31 Qf4! Rxe7 32 Rxe7+ Qxe7 33 Nd5 he would have gained a draw: 33 ... Qf7 (33 ... Qd6 34

Qg5+) 34 Qxf7+ Kxf7 35 Nxc7 Ne3+ 36 Kf2 Nd1+ 37 Kg3 Nxb2 38 Nb5.

28 ... **Kg6** (here the king is not threatened in any way) 29 **Ne2**

A difficult choice. 29 Qd8? Qh1+ 30 Bg1 Ne3+ was not possible, nor was 29 Nd5? Qh1+ 30 Qg1 Bd3+ 31 Ke1 Qxg1+ 32 Bxg1 Bc4 (Korchnoi), while if 29 Rd1 Black could have replied 29 ... b6 30 Qd8 Qh1+ 31 Bg1 Kf7! 32 Re1 Qh6! 33 Qd5+ Be6, surrounding the e7-pawn.

29 ... **Qh1+**



30 **Ng1?**

More stubborn resistance could have been offered by going into a bad endgame by 30 Qg1 Qxg1+ 31 Kxg1 b6 32 Ba3 Ne3 (Korchnoi) or 32 ... c5 33 b4 Ne3! and ... Nc2. Black would have picked up the e7-pawn, retaining the initiative. With the queens on he quickly creates decisive threats to the king.

30 ... **b6** 31 **Qd8** **Nf6** 32 **Ba3** **Be4** 33 **Qd2** **c5** 34 **b4** **c4** 35 **b5** **Bd3+** 0-1

'This is a special game, one that is closest to my heart. Played towards the end of a very difficult tournament, it is full of fighting spirit from start to finish.' (Korchnoi)

In the final round both Korchnoi's rivals gained victories, but he too won 'to order' against Suetin – and nevertheless became national champion: 1. Korchnoi – 14 out of 19; 2-3. Geller and Petrosian – 13½;

4. Bagirov – 12; 5. Polugayevsky – $11\frac{1}{2}$; 6. Averbakh – 11; 7-8. Smyslov and Taimanov – $10\frac{1}{2}$; 9-10. Krogus and Spassky – 10; 11. Simagin – $9\frac{1}{2}$; 12. Bronstein – 9, etc.

A brilliant finish! And staggering aggression: $+12-3=4$. 'My thorough self-analysis bore fruit,' Korchnoi wrote several years later. 'I think that in the competitive sense this was one of my greatest successes.' As we have seen, the tournament turned out well for him in not only the competitive sense, but also the creative. He triumphed by unswervingly following his distinctive manner of play. His opponents, even the most famous, were unable to withstand the tension he created. This is Korchnoi's trademark, which has distinguished his play for many decades.

Here are the interesting reactions of two contestants in that championship.

Bronstein: 'Essentially only three players – Korchnoi, Petrosian and Geller – were in contention for first place. Each of them had his motto: the first – "Risk and win!", the second – "Win without risk!", and the third – "Create!". Moreover, in his style each of this trio is a genuine champion. The play of the new USSR Champion is characterised by amazing tenacity in defence, resourcefulness in attack and virtuoso mastery in the endgame ... It is to be hoped that this victory will not go to the head of the young grandmaster.'

Simagin: 'Korchnoi's play is highly distinctive. In contrast to some of his colleagues, he does not aim to rationalise his chess style. From the very start of a game Korchnoi normally imposes mind-boggling complications on his opponent. This striving for complications often leads him into rather dubious positions, where for many hours he has to parry numerous threats. He is an exceptionally strong-willed player. And in the field of tactical mastery, Korchnoi, in my view, is not inferior to Tal.'

Drama on Curaçao

In the middle of an international tournament organised by the Central Chess Club (Moscow, May-June 1960) Korchnoi won five successive games and yet still finished half a point behind the winners: 1-2. Kholmov and Smyslov $8\frac{1}{2}$ out of 11; Korchnoi – 8, etc. But here he won another textbook game in the Grünfeld Defence, and against an old 'offender' Vladimir Simagin – a prominent expert on this opening.

Game 8

V.Simagin-V.Korchnoi

Moscow 1960, 8th round

Grünfeld Defence D91

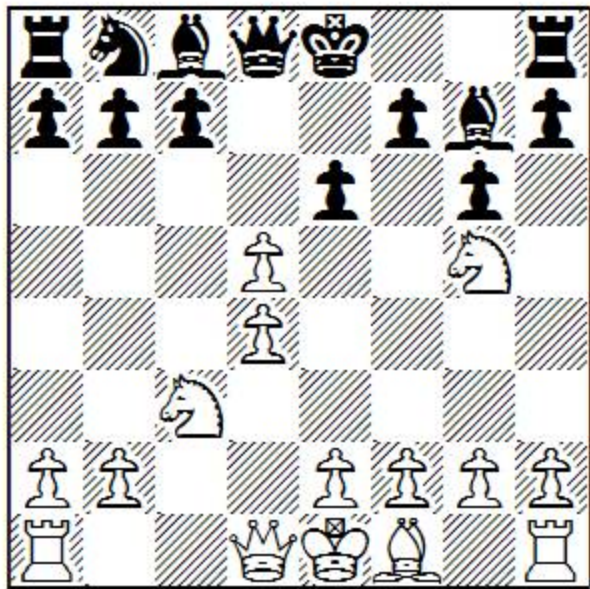
1 d4 Nf6 2 Nf3 g6 3 c4 Bg7 4 Nc3 (4 g3 – *Game Nos. 100 and 101*) 4 ... d5 5 Bg5 (not the most aggressive variation, but a very reliable one; 5 Bf4 – *Game No. 1*; 5 Qb3 – *Game No. 5*) 5 ... Ne4 6 cxd5

After 6 Bh4 Korchnoi used to play 6 ... c6 or 6 ... c5, but later the main reply became 6 ... Nxc3 7 bxc3 dxc4 8 e3 b5 or 8 Qa4+ Qd7 9 Qxc4 b6.

6 ... Nxc3

In the earlier game Simagin-Korchnoi (20th USSR Championship, Moscow 1952) after 6 ... Nxc3 7 bxc3 Qxd5 8 e3 Bg4 9 Be2 Nc6 10 Bh4 0-0 11 0-0 Rfe8 12 Bg3 White retained some advantage.

7 Nxg5 e6



In the game Petrosian-Korchnoi (41st USSR Championship, Moscow 1973) Black surprised his opponent with a pawn sacrifice – 7 ... c6!? and after the cautious 8 Nf3 (8 dxc6 is more critical) 8 ... cxd5 9 e3 0-0 10 Be2 Nc6 11 0-0 e6 he gained a perfectly sound position.

8 Nf3

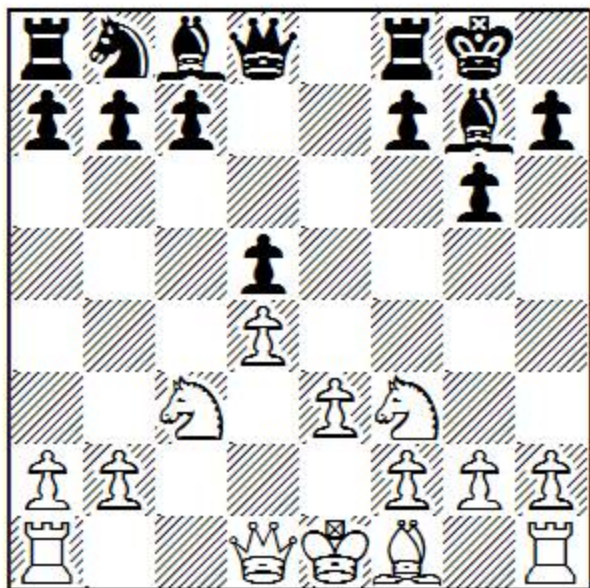
After the sharper attempt 8 Qd2 exd5 9 Qe3+ Kf8 10 Qf4 Bf6 11 h4 h6 12 Nf3 c6 13 e3 Be6 14 Bd3 Nd7 15 0-0-0, both 15 ... Kg7 16 g4 Qb8! (Spassky-Stein, 31st USSR Championship, Leningrad 1963) and 15 ... Qb8! (Bisguier-Korchnoi, Lone Pine 1979) are possible, in each case with equality.

8 ... exd5 9 e3

A grandmaster nuance: the immediate 9 b4 allows 9 ... Qd6!, and if 10 Qb3, then 10 ... Nc6! Therefore White is forced to waste a tempo on 10 a3, and after 10 ... 0-0 11 e3 c6 12 Be2 Bf5 13 0-0 Nd7 14 Na4?! (14 Qb3 is equal) 14 ... a5! 15 Qb3?! b5 16 Nc5 a4! 17 Qc3 Nb6 18 Nd2 Rae8 19 Rfe1 Re7 Black has an excellent game (Seirawan-Kasparov, Dubai Olympiad 1986).

9 ... 0-0

Nowadays the most accurate is considered to be 9 ... a5! 10 Be2 0-0 11 0-0 c6 (I.Ivanov-Tseshkovsky, Erevan 1977). It is on such micro-nuances that modern opening theory is built.



10 Be2

Later it transpired that the classical minority attack 10 b4! is more energetic. The following continuations are possible:

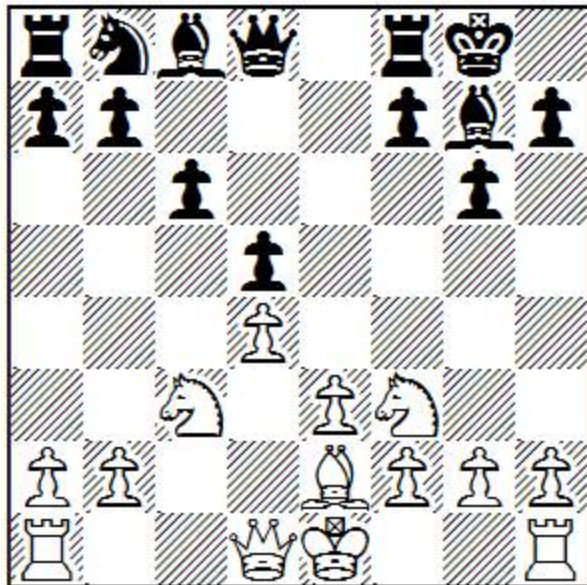
1) 10 ... Be6 11 Be2 Nd7 12 0-0 f5 13 Re1 g5 (the same plan as in the note to Black's 11th move, but ... against a far more sophisticated opponent!) 14 Rc1 Kh8 15 Bd3 c6 (15 ... a6!? Karpov) 16 b5 g4 17

Nd2 c5 18 dxc5 Nxc5 19 Nb3 Nxb3 20 axb3! Rc8 21 Ne2, and White was able to exploit the holes in the enemy position (Karpov-Korchnoi, London 1984);

2) 10 ... c6 11 Bd3!? (11 Be2 Be6 12 0-0 Nd7 13 Rc1 occurred in the source game Antoshin-Gligoric, Zagreb 1965) 11 ... Nd7 12 0-0 Nb6 13 a4 Be6 14 b5 c5 15 dxc5! Bxc3 16 Rc1 Bb2 17 Rb1 Bf6 18 cxb6 (Seirawan-Korchnoi, Brussels 1986) 18 ... Qxb6, and Black's two bishops compensate for the weakness of his isolated d5-pawn;

3) 10 ... Qd6 11 Qb3 Be6 12 Be2 c6 13 0-0 Nd7 14 Ne1 a5!? with a complicated game (Barbero-Korchnoi, Novi Sad Olympiad 1990).

10 ... c6



11 0-0

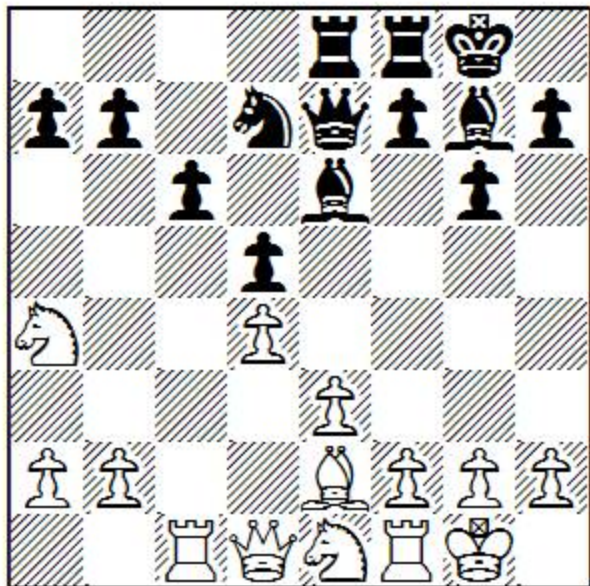
If 11 b4!? there could have followed 11 ... Be6 or 11 ... a5!? 12 b5 a4 (12 ... c5!?) 13 0-0 Qa5 (Ostermeyer-Korchnoi, Biel 1984). In any event, refraining from b2-b4 makes things easier for Black.

11 ... Be6

A slight innovation, like 11 ... a5!? (Uhlmann-Simagin, Budapest 1961). Earlier 11 ... Qe7 was played, for example: 12 Rc1 Nd7 13 Ne1 Nb6 14 Nd3 Re8 15 Nc5 Nc4 and ... b7-b6 with equality (Vaitonis-Keres, Tartu 1938), or 12 a3 Nd7!? (12 ... Be6 13 Rc1 Nd7 14 Ne1 Nb6 15 Nd3 Rad8 16 Nc5 Bc8 17 b4 Nc4 and ... b7-b6 with equality, Lasker-Botvinnik, Nottingham 1936) 13 b4 Nb6 14 Qb3 Be6 15 Rfe1

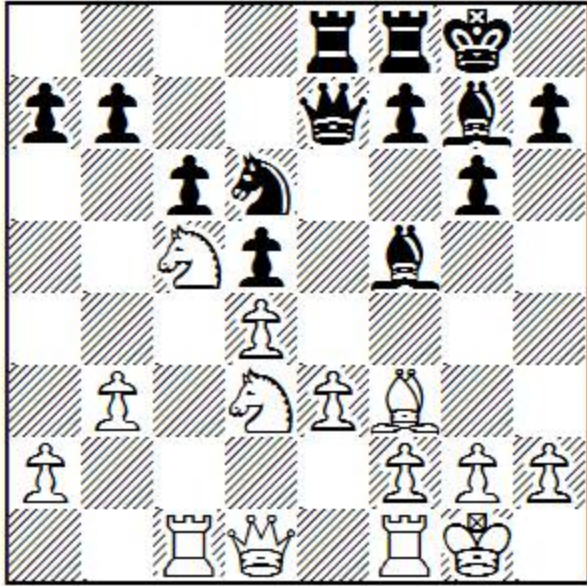
f5 16 Bf1 g5 17 Ne2 Nc4 with approximate equality (Aronin-Korchnoi, 24th USSR Championship, Moscow 1957).

12 Na4 (12 b4!?) 12 ... Nd7 13 Rc1 Qe7 14 Ne1 Rae8



‘Since White is not creating any concrete threats, Black comfortably deploys his pieces – in the centre, but with the idea of soon launching an attack on the kingside.’ (Korchnoi)

15 Nd3 Bf5 (threatening ... Bxd4) 16 Bf3 Nb6! 17 Nac5 Nc4 18 b3 Nd6



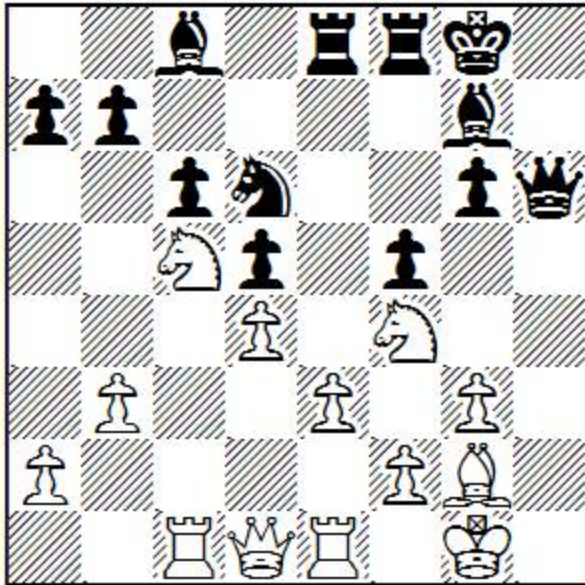
The ideal place for the knight in such positions with a 'Carlsbad' pawn structure. We have already seen this in two games analysed in a previous volume, Bobotsov-Petrosian and Portisch-Kasparov (*Volume 3, Game Nos.43 and 44*).

19 Re1 h5! 20 g3 h4 21 Bg2 Bc8 22 Nf4 hxg3 23 hxg3 Qg5 24 Bh3!? (in order, after exchanging the light-squared bishops, to play Kg2 and Rh1) 24 ... f5!?

Black is against simplification – a clear indication that he is playing for a win!

25 Bg2 (now 25 Kg2 would have left the bishop out of play at h3) 25 ... Qh6

With the obvious intention of playing ... g6-g5 followed by ... f5-f4, and possibly switching the rook to the h-file.



26 Nxd5!

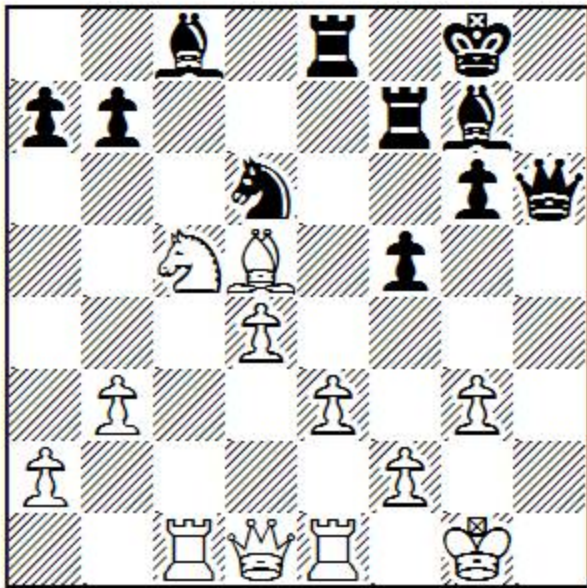
Simagin, a player of attacking style, tries to change the course of events with the help of a piece sacrifice. White would have lost after 26 f3? g5 27 Nfd3 (27 Nh3 f4) 27 ... Rxe3! 28 Rxe3 Bxd4, while if 26 Bf3 g5 27 Nh5 Korchnoi was planning 27 ... Re7 (threatening 28 ... g4 29 Nxg7 gxf3) 28 Be2 f4 with a strong attack. Neither 28 Nxg7 Rxd7 29 Rc2 Rh7 30 Nd3 f4, nor 28 g4 Ne4!? 29 gxf5 Bxf5 30 Nxe4 Bxe4 31 Bg4 Re7 etc. is any better for White.

26 ... cxd5 27 Bxd5+ Rf7!

A very interesting moment – one of those, that says much about the strength of a player. The character of the position has suddenly changed: after lengthy manoeuvring it is time for unclear tactical complications with unbalanced material. A player has to operate with quite different categories, and it is not everyone who would be able to instantly retune and correctly evaluate the new situation. But Korchnoi found a way of continuing the fight for the initiative by a counter-sacrifice of the exchange: ‘That day I did not want to play defensively. Indeed, would White really give up his powerful bishop, which covers all the light squares in his position, for some pitiful rook?!’

Let us see what other replies would have promised. In the event of 27 ... Nf7 28 Nxb7 White has three pawns for the piece with a solid position, and it can be considered that he has made a favourable

exchange (after 28 ... Be6 Korchnoi advises 29 Bg2 'with an unclear game'). After 27 ... Kh8? 28 Kg2 Qh7 29 Rh1 Bh6 30 Qf3! Black is in difficulties on account of the pin on the h-file. 27 ... Kh7 is better, but here too White plays 28 Kg2! (instead of Korchnoi's 28 f4 g5 29 Rc2 Qf6 30 Rh2+ Bh6 31 Kf2 Kg7 with advantage to Black) 28 ... Qg5 29 Rh1+ Bh6 30 Nd3 or 30 Qf3 with the ideas of Nxb7 and Nd3-e5, as well as Rh4 and Rch1, retaining real compensation for the sacrificed piece.



28 e4!?

White continues to play for the opening of the position, hoping to exploit the pin on the rook. '... b7-b6 was threatened, and, after the retreat of the knight, ... Bb7 or ... Be6' (Korchnoi). If 28 Bxf7+ (28 Qf3 g5!) there could have followed 28 ... Nxf7 (28 ... Kxf7 29 Qf3 Rh8 30 Qd5+ is not so clear) 29 Qf3 g5! Now it is bad to play 30 Nxb7 g4 31 Qd5 Be6 32 Qb5 (32 Qc6 Rc8, and the threat of ..Ng5-f3+ forces White to give up his queen) 32 ... Rb8 followed by ... Ng5-f3+ and a terribly strong attack on the light squares. The cautious 30 Qh1 (30 Qd5 Rd8) 30 ... Qxh1+ 31 Kxh1 also favours Black in view of 31 ... b6 32 Nd3 Bb7+ 33 Kg1 Bf3!

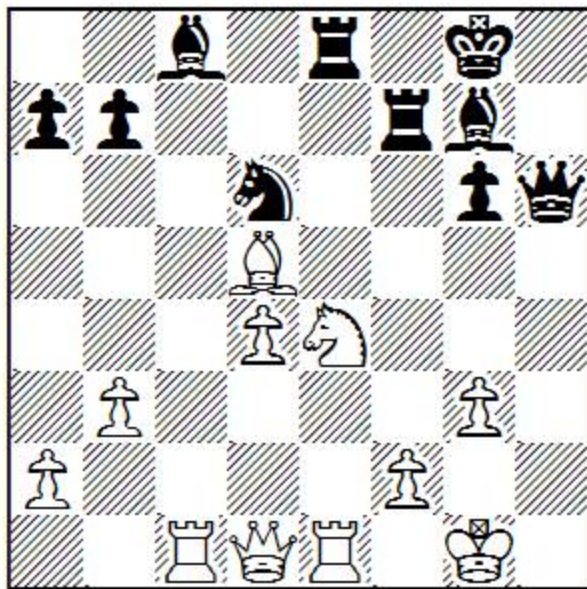
28 ... fxe4

Another non-trivial decision. 28 ... f4 (but not 28 ... b6? 29 e5) 29 e5 fxe4 30 fxe4 Qh3 31 Qf3 would have led to complicated play. But here

it would not be easy for Black to develop an attack on the king, and the pair of passed pawns in the centre would have given White fair prospects. And this would have been something of an achievement for Simagin: his combination would have forced the opponent not only to solve unexpected practical problems, but also to go in for a definite strategic risk.

29 Nxe4

Things appear to be desperate for Black (29 ... Nxe4 30 Rxe4 and wins).

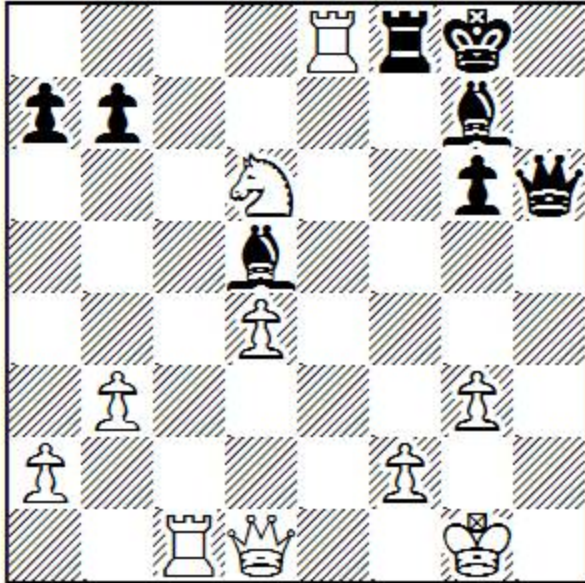


29 ... Be6!!

'A defence that was not anticipated by my opponent.' (Korchnoi). A fantastic, amazingly pretty move: Black does not simply eliminate the pin – he also leaves his rook to be taken with check!

30 Nxd6 Bxd5 31 Rxe8+ Rf8

As we see, Korchnoi not only rose to the occasion when the character of the play changed sharply, but also managed to set his opponent the most unpleasant problems. After all, Simagin himself was striving to seize the initiative, but instead of this he is forced to parry threats (for the moment – mate in one move).



32 Re4?

A blunder, leading to the loss of a piece. 'It was essential to play 32 f3 Rxe8 33 Nxe8 Qe3+ 34 Kg2 Qxe8 35 Qe1, 35 Qd3 or 35 Rc7 – in each case with a roughly equal game.' (Korchnoi). Even so, Black's two bishops would have been slightly stronger than the rook and two pawns and they might have seriously disturbed the white king. Evidently it was this that Simagin did not like.

32 ... g5!

A surprise: from h6, where it was creating threats on the h-file, suddenly the queen also attacks the knight at d6. 'My opponent probably missed this. If this move, this idea – of winning the knight! – had not been available to Black, with 32 ... Bxd4 he would have gained an initiative, compensating for his material deficit.' (Korchnoi). But in my opinion, after 33 Rc2! Bxe4 (33 ... Rxf2? clearly does not work) 34 Nxe4 Qg7 35 Qg4 White is a healthy pawn to the good.

33 Rc7 Qxd6 34 Ree7

If 34 Rxg7+ Kxg7 35 Re5 Black was planning 35 ... Bf3!, locking in the enemy king: 36 Rxg5+ (36 Qd2 Qh6!; 36 Qc1 g4) 36 ... Kf6 37 Qd2 Rh8 and wins. The desperate attack along the 7th rank also achieves nothing: the bishops defend all the squares. The fate of the game is decided.

34 ... Bf6 35 Red7

35 Rcd7! Qc6 36 Rc7 was a tougher defence, practically forcing the queen sacrifice 36 ... Bxe7! 37 Rxc6 bxc6 'with a clear advantage to Black' (Korchnoi). It is probably enough for a win: the lone queen can hardly prevent the rook and two bishops from creating decisive threats to the white king.

35 ... Qe6 36 Rxd5

White would have lost after both 36 Qb1 Be4 37 Qe1 Qg4 with the threat of ... Qf3, and 36 Kh2 Be5 (Korchnoi) or 36 ... Bxd4!

36 ... Qxd5 37 Qh5 Bg7 (easily parrying the last farewell threat by the queen) 38 Qg6 Qxd4 39 Qe6+ Kh7 40 Qh3+ Kg6 41 Qe6+ Rf6 42 Qe2 b5 43 g4 Kh6 0-1

In this game Korchnoi once again displayed his best qualities – his ability to react suitably to a changing situation and to set problems that were psychologically the most unpleasant for his opponent, plus precise calculation at the critical moments.

In July 1960 the USSR Champion shared first place with Reshevsky in a major international tournament in Buenos Aires, ahead of 18 other competitors, including Szabo, Taimanov, Evans, Olafsson, Unzicker, Gligoric, Benko, Uhlmann, Ivkov and the young Fischer. And in the autumn he made a successful debut for the Soviet team at the Olympiad in Leipzig: +8 =5 on board 4. I should remind you that the top three boards were Tal, Botvinnik and Keres, and the two reserves – Smyslov and Petrosian. A fantastic line-up!

That memorable year was crowned by victory over Botvinnik in the traditional Moscow-Leningrad match. Botvinnik was actively preparing for his return match with Tal, and a duel with the new national champion was simply good training for him. 'Well, and for me to play the "Patriarch" – as he was then called – was something out of the ordinary!' writes Korchnoi, and with his customary mercilessness to himself he criticises his notes of nearly half a century earlier: 'For a young grandmaster it is pleasant to boast about his win over the ex-world champion, at the same time emphasising the consistency of his play and the logical nature of the result. But in Aesopian Soviet language "I make things difficult for myself" it means that in home analysis I was unable to find a win in the event of the bishop manoeuvre to h3. Meanwhile, there was a win ... A weakly-played game by both contestants.'

He also performed splendidly in the 28th USSR Championship, a Zonal event (Moscow, January-February 1961): 1. Petrosian – 13½ out

of 19; 2. Korchnoi – 13; 3-4. Geller and Stein – 12; 5-6. Smyslov and Spassky – 11, etc.

The finishing drama of the 24-year-old Spassky has been described in Volume 3 (*Game Nos.53 and 57*). Today Boris Vasilievich explains his failure by a kind of ‘ill fate’ or ‘divine retribution’ and thinks that, had he finished in the first four, chess history could have turned out differently: ‘If I had also gone through to the Interzonal, the Candidates tournament on Curaçao could well have been won by Keres.’ True, the outcome of the tournament on Curaçao could also have been different, if Stein had played in it instead of Benko ... However – one is obliged to repeat once again – history does not recognise the subjunctive mood.

Soon after that championship the Tal-Botvinnik return match began. Shortly before it both contestants, via their seconds, expressed the desire to work with Korchnoi. His reaction was eloquent: ‘I declined them both. Not because I thought that I had nothing to learn from Botvinnik or Tal, but I considered that if I myself was intending to fight for the title of world champion, I should not go and work with them. In our time many young players behave differently ...’

Korchnoi’s debut in the Interzonal tournament, which took place a year later, caused his supporters considerable anxiety: a sensational fiasco in a game with Cuellar, defeats against Portisch and Fischer ... Apart from the young American, Petrosian and Geller confidently reached their goal. But, nevertheless, Korchnoi also gained entry to the Candidates tournament, scoring nine wins and gaining a draw in a highly important game from the last round. Whereas Stein, who was level with him, lost, and although he occupied a qualifying sixth place, he turned out to be the ‘superfluous fourth’ in the dispute of the Soviet stars, who because of the whim of FIDE had only three vacancies.

The ‘battle of eight’ on the distant island of Curaçao (May-June 1962) has already been partly covered in Volume 4, in the chapter ‘The Russian Pact’. In fact the pact consisted in three of the Soviet grandmasters – Petrosian, Keres and Geller – drawing all the games among themselves. And endeavouring to win against the weakened Tal (he played soon after a major operation) and the uncompromising Korchnoi and Fischer, to say nothing about Benko and Filip, who were inferior in class.

But initially this pragmatic plan did not work: after starting with four draws, Korchnoi then suddenly surged into the lead, gaining three

successive wins – over Fischer, Filip (in 101 moves, after two days' play) and Tal! Here is the first of these:

Game 9

R.Fischer-V.Korchnoi

Candidates Tournament, Curaçao 1962, 5th round

Pirc-Ufimtsev Defence B09

1 e4 d6 2 d4 Nf6 3 Nc3 g6

Korchnoi has played not more than a dozen games in his entire career with this defence, considering it 'not altogether correct'. On this occasion, taking account of the narrowness of his opponent's opening repertoire, he was trying to catch him in a specific variation.

4 f4 (4 Nf3 – Game Nos.73 and 77) 4 ... Bg7 5 Nf3 0-0

The alternative is 5 ... c5 6 dxc5 (6 Bb5+ Bd7 Savon-Korchnoi, 41st USSR Championship, Moscow 1973) 6 ... Qa5 7 Bd3 Qxc5 8 Qe2 Bg4! 9 Be3 Qa5 10 0-0 0-0 11 h3 (11 Rad1 Nc6 12 Bc4 Nh5!? Spassky-Fischer, 17th matchgame, Reykjavik 1972) 11 ... Bxf3 12 Qxf3 Nc6 13 Ne2?! Nd7 14 c3? Nde5! 15 fxe5 Nxe5 16 Qg3 Nxd3 ... 0-1 (Hübner-Korchnoi, Skelleftea 1989).

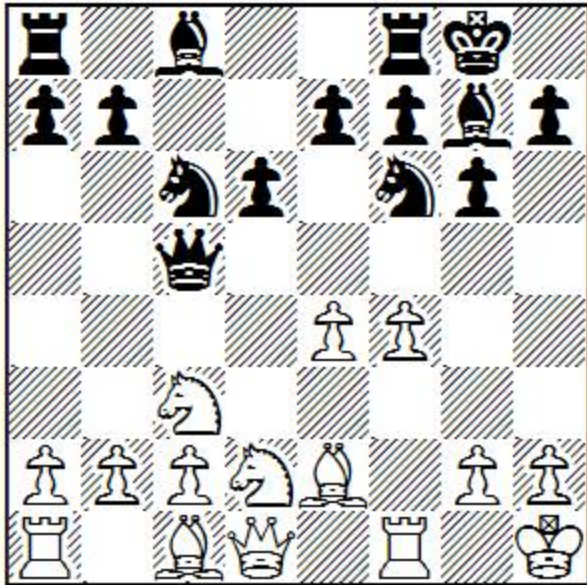
6 Be2

'According to the state of theory in the summer of 1962, 6 Be2 was the best move in this position.' (Korchnoi). After this game everyone, including Fischer, switched to 6 Bd3 (*Volume 4, Game No.72*).

6 ... c5 7 dxc5 Qa5 8 0-0 Qxc5+ 9 Kh1 Nc6 10 Nd2

An idea of Evgeny Vasyukov, who himself thought up its refutation. 10 Bd3 followed by Qe1 and Be3 is better (Boleslavsky-Ufimtsev, Sverdlovsk 1951), or first 10 Qe1.

'Prior to the tournament,' Korchnoi remembers, 'in a holiday home near Moscow, I had studied this very position with my helper, grandmaster Vasyukov. Generally speaking, at that time I did not play the Pirc Defence, and its various branches were totally unfamiliar to me, but Vasyukov persuaded me to take a risk: Fischer was bound to play this way! And Fischer did not let me down.'



10 ... a5!

A strong novelty. At that time 10 ... Nd4 11 Nb3 Nxb3 12 axb3 (Vasyukov-Bastrikov, Kiev 1957) or 10 ... Be6 11 Nb3 Qb6 12 g4! was judged to favour White.

11 Nb3?!

'This soon creates serious difficulties for White. Non-routine moves demand non-routine replies to refute them,' writes Korchnoi, who recommends 11 Nc4. Here are some sample variations:

1) 11 ... Ng4 12 Nd5! (12 Bxg4 Bxg4 13 Qxg4 Qxc4 is insipid) 12 ... Nf2+ 13 Rxf2 Qxf2 14 Be3 Qh4 15 Ncb6! (not 15 g3 Qh3 Westerinen-Donner, Bamberg 1968) 15 ... Rb8 16 Nxc8 Rf(b)xc8 17 g3 Qh6 18 f5 g5 19 Qd2! (not 19 h4 Bxb2 Filipowicz-Plater, Warsaw 1964) 19 ... Bf6 20 h4 or 19 ... Bxb2 20 Bxg5 Qg7 21 Rf1, and 'Black has a difficult position';

2) 11 ... Bg4! 12 Be3 Qh5 13 Bxg4 Nxg4 14 Bg1 b5! 15 Nb6 Bd4! 16 h3 Bxg1 17 Nxa8 Nf2+ 18 Rxf2 Qxd1 19 Rxd1 Bxf2 with equality, or 14 h3, and after 14 ... Nxe3 15 Qxh5 gxh5 16 Nxe3 'White's position is slightly better', but 14 ... Bxc3!? 15 bxc3 Nf6 (Korchnoi) is interesting, or 14 ... b5! with easy equality.

11 ... Qb6 12 a4

Defending against the threat of ... a5-a4-a3. The alternatives were unfavourable: 12 Nd5 Nxd5 13 exd5 a4! 14 dxc6?! (14 Nd2 Nb4 15

Nc4 Qc5) 14 ... axb3 15 cxb7 Rxa2! (Korchnoi) 16 bxc8Q Rxc8 17 Bd2 Bxb2 and wins, or 12 a3 a4 13 Nd2 Qc5 or 13 ... Qd4.

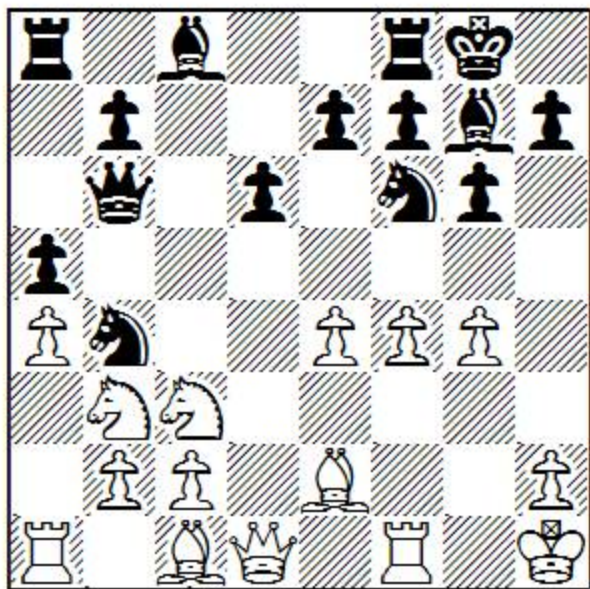
12 ... Nb4

As a result of the slow manoeuvre Nf3-d2-b3 a favourable version for Black of the Dragon Variation has arisen.

13 g4?

A standard attacking move, but here it runs into a powerful counter. Practice has shown that White does not even have equal chances after 13 f5 d5 14 e5 Ne4!, or 13 Bf3 Be6 14 Nd4 Bc4 15 Nce2 (15 Re1 Ng4!) 15 ... e5 16 Nb5 d5!, or 13 Ra3 Rd8 14 Bf3 d5 15 e5 Ne4 16 Nd4 f6!

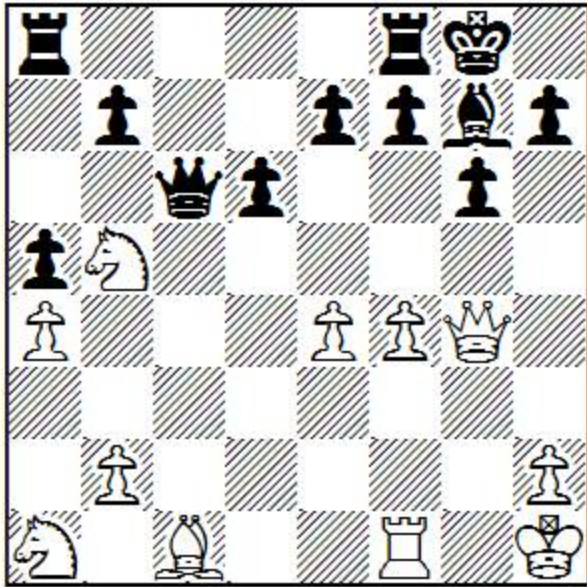
However, Korchnoi's recommendation 13 Nd2! is better, and in the event of 13 ... d5?! 14 e5 Ne4 15 Ncxe4 dxe4 16 c3 Nd3 17 Nxe4 Nxc1 (17 ... Nxb2? 18 Qd4!) 18 Qxc1 Bf5 19 Ng3 Black does not have sufficient compensation for the pawn, while if 13 ... Be6, then 14 f5 with sharp play. 13 ... Rd8 or 13 ... Bd7 is also unclear. Indeed, 'it is hard to suggest how Black can maintain his advantage.'



13 ... Bxg4! 14 Bxg4 Nxg4 15 Qxg4 Nxc2 16 Nb5

After 16 Nd5?! Qxb3 17 Nxe7+ Kh8 18 f5 Nxa1 19 f6 Bxf6 20 Rxf6 Rfe8 21 Nd5 Qc4! 22 Nc3 (22 Bh6? Rxe4) 22 ... Nb3 23 Bh6 Nc5 or 23 ... Kg8 (Korchnoi) Black repels the attack and should be able to convert his exchange advantage.

16 ... Nxa1 17 Nxa1 Qc6



‘For the moment White is alright materially, but his pieces are badly placed, and loss of material cannot be avoided.’ (Korchnoi)

18 f5

Hopeless alternatives are 18 Qf3 Rfc8 19 Kg2 Qc4! 20 b3 Qxc1, or 19 Nb3 Qc4, stealing up on the a4-pawn, or 19 Be3 Bxb2 20 Rb1 (20 Na7 Qxa4; 20 Nb3 Qc4!) 20 ... Bf6 21 Na7 Rxa7 22 Bxa7 Qxa4 and Black wins.

18 ... Qc4 19 Qf3 Qxa4 20 Nc7 Qxa1 21 Nd5?

The decisive error. As shown by Korchnoi, it was essential to play 21 Nxa8 Rxa8 22 fxg6 fxg6 23 Qb3+! (if 23 Qf7+ Kh8 24 Qxe7, in the hope of 24 ... Qa4 25 Be3 Re8?? 26 Bd4!! when White wins, then simply 24 ... Qb1! 25 Qxb7 Re8 26 Re1 Qd3, winning) 23 ... Kh8 24 Qxb7 with drawing chances in view of the bad position of the black queen: 24 ... Rf8 25 Rxf8+ Bxf8 26 Qc8, or 24 ... Rg8 25 Qb3 (25 Qxe7!?) 25 ... Qb1 26 Qc4.

21 ... Rae8 22 Bg5

After 22 Bh6 Qxb2 23 Nxe7+ Rxe7 24 Bxg7, according to Korchnoi, the ‘cynical’ move 24 ... f6! would have won.

22 ... Qxb2 23 Bxe7 (or 23 Nxe7+ Rxe7 24 Bxe7 Be5!) 23 ... Be5! 24 Rf2 (24 Qh3 Qe2) 24 ... Qc1+ 25 Rf1 Qh6 26 h3 gxf5 27 Bxf8 Rxf8 28 Ne7+ Kh8 29 Nxf5 Qe6 30 Rg1 a4 31 Rg4 Qb3 32 Qf1 a3 0-1

After the first quarter the Leningrad grandmaster, with 5 out of 7, was a point ahead of Geller, Keres and Petrosian. In the second quarter he again began with four draws, and after 11 rounds he was leading together with Geller, half a point ahead of Keres and Petrosian, and one and a half ahead of Fischer.

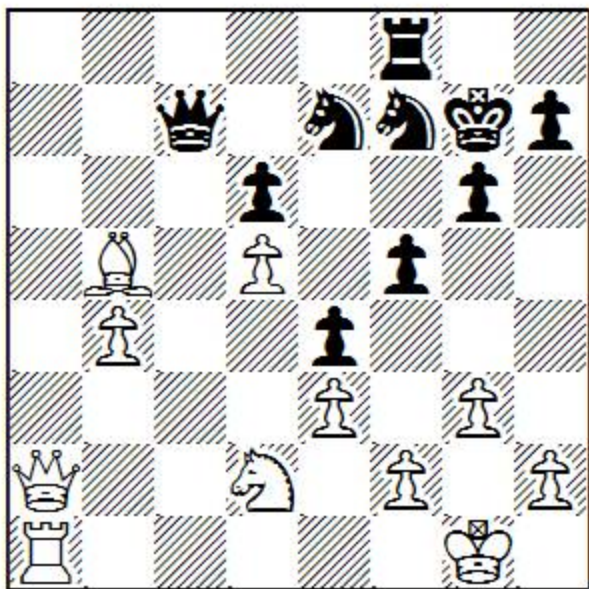
But playing flat-out in conditions of tropical heat had its effect: he became terribly tired. 'He was not ready for such an important event, in particular physically,' writes Viktor Vasiliev. 'Already at the end of the first quarter, when his rivals were timorously observing his successes, Korchnoi realised perfectly well that he was incapable of fighting for first place. His play was laboured, and after every game he felt tired and jaded.'

Knowing this, one is no longer surprised by the tragic blunder that occurred in Korchnoi's game from the second quarter with Fischer.

Game 10

V.Korchnoi-R.Fischer

Candidates Tournament, Curaçao 1962, 12th round



31 Bc6?

A mental black-out! White should have included 31 Qb2+!, retaining his extra pawn and every chance of winning: 31 ... Ne5 32

Nc4, or 31 ... Kg8 32 Bc6 Nxc6 (otherwise b4-b5) 33 Rc1 Nfe5 34 dxc6 etc.

31 ... Nxc6 32 Rc1?? Qa7!, and Black won a piece, and with it the game. 'Yes, it was terrible to lose in this way to the self-confident American,' wrote the Soviet press.

True, after this drama he still achieved, and in good style, his 'regular win' against Filip. But then he lost to Tal (the only time for many years!) and finished the second quarter only fourth, a point behind Geller and Petrosian and half a point behind Keres.

Yuri Averbakh, one of the Soviet grandmasters' trainers, recalls: 'After the first half of the tournament our group expanded: the wives of the contestants flew in, which brought a certain diversity to their measured life. A short break was arranged, which all the contestants spent on St Martin, an even smaller island than Curaçao. There they swam and sunbathed, and five days later they again sat down to play. The start of the second half was marked by a wonderful spurt by Keres – 3 out of 3! But he was unable to break away: Petrosian and Geller were still just half a point behind him.'

It would appear that the week on the beach was the last straw for Korchnoi: at the start of the third quarter he lost in turn to Geller, Petrosian and Keres ... 'That which happened with him on Curaçao was something of a record. And not only in his individual chess career: chess history, which tells a number of tragic stories, can hardly remember an instance when, in a tournament of such scale, one of the leaders suffered four successive defeats!' (V.Vasiliev)

Korchnoi conclusively dropped out of the fight for first place and in the end he finished 4 points behind Petrosian, 3½ behind Keres and Geller, and half a point behind Fischer. A slight consolation was provided by his win over the American in the third quarter, enabling him to win their mini-match (2½-1½). A characteristic touch: on all of the moves in his 27 games, the tournament winner, the pragmatic Petrosian, spent a total of 48 hours 40 minutes, whereas the implacable fighter Korchnoi spent 72 hours 10 minutes, i.e. one and a half times more!

After such a failure, many could have lost heart, but not Korchnoi. On returning home, he set about trying to eliminate his chess deficiencies with redoubled energy. 'In Curaçao I lacked the discipline and technique to convert an advantage at high level (although I did possess some technique!)' Viktor Lvovich wrote five years later. 'But

where there was great resistance, haste appeared – perhaps my nerves failed me (*yes, technique is all nerves, as Alekhine once commented – G.K.*). Towards the end of a game I would become tired, and as a result – blunders. I again had to sit down with my books, and study the games of Rubinstein and other experts on the endgame. Six months later, at the championship of the country in Erevan, I felt much more confident.’

Indeed, in the 30th USSR Championship (Erevan, November-December 1962) he fought only for first place, and with success: 1. Korchnoi – 14 out of 19 (after starting with 11 out of 13!); 2-3. Taimanov and Tal – 13½; 4. Kholmov – 13; 5. Spassky – 12½; 6. Stein – 11½, etc. Soon this triumph was supplemented by a brilliant victory in the Capablanca Memorial tournament (Havana 1963): 1. Korchnoi – 16½ out of 21; 2-4. Geller, Pachman and Tal – 16, etc. According to the press, the experts observed some obvious changes in his play: Korchnoi’s style had become more flexible, more universal than before.

Earlier he had stated: ‘I don’t like to be the first to attack, just as I don’t like to sacrifice my pieces and pawns.’ But now he increasingly often made moves, about which he would later write: ‘On this occasion, betraying my rules, I fought for the initiative, I sacrificed a pawn.’ In addition, he learned how to skilfully exploit even a slight positional advantage. But at the same time Korchnoi realised perfectly well that he had not achieved that technical mastery for which he had aimed.

Towards the end of the same year a temporary decline occurred in his play, which was practically unavoidable, given the fierce rivalry that reigned in Soviet chess. In the 31st USSR Championship (1963) which, I should remind you, was a qualifying event not for the Interzonal, but to a double-round Zonal tournament, Korchnoi finished 10th and was allowed into the next stage only as an ‘outstanding grandmaster’. But also in the Zonal ‘tournament of seven’ he finished in only a share of 5th-6th places, after losing at the finish to Stein (*Volume 3, Game No.63*) and Spassky.

And again he did not lose heart! I was interested to learn that, like myself many years later, one of the books that Korchnoi constantly had to hand was a collection of 300 games of Alekhine, and he often turned to that chess genius for advice. Like Alekhine, he could well have said: ‘By means of chess I formed my character.’ Or: ‘Chess teaches you first and foremost to be objective. In chess you can become a great master, only by recognising your mistakes and deficiencies.’

To another important thought of Alekhine – ‘To become a grandmaster, apart from great talent, you must also have a secure material future and great capacity for work’ – Korchnoi added the words: ‘A whole-hearted love for chess is also needed. The time of natural geniuses (Capablanca), who devoted little attention to preparation, has passed. Now success requires a great deal of work.’

And he, already twice USSR Champion, continued working on chess like no one else (except, perhaps, Fischer). He was 33 years old – at the very height of his powers ... Later he bitterly lamented that he had lost a great deal of time in his youth, that he had not been taught to play correctly, to fight fiercely for the initiative: ‘I realised that I had to re-learn, that my play was littered with deficiencies, and that I was frequently unfamiliar with the rudiments of grandmaster chess. And for a good ten years I endeavoured to master these rudiments. In the end when, fully armed with my knowledge and understanding of chess, at the age of forty plus I was ready to battle with anyone for the title of world champion, I had already exhausted much of my God-given energy. Therefore I did not in fact manage to become world champion ...’

Opening for all Times

Korchnoi's next peak was his convincing victory in the 32nd USSR Championship (Kiev 1964/65). Two years later he was to write: 'Versatility helped. I think it was at that time that I achieved my best understanding of positions.' After his start – 10 out of 11! – the fate of the gold medal was already practically decided. Among those defeated were Shamkovich, Lein, Averbakh, Kholmov, Bronstein, Tal ...

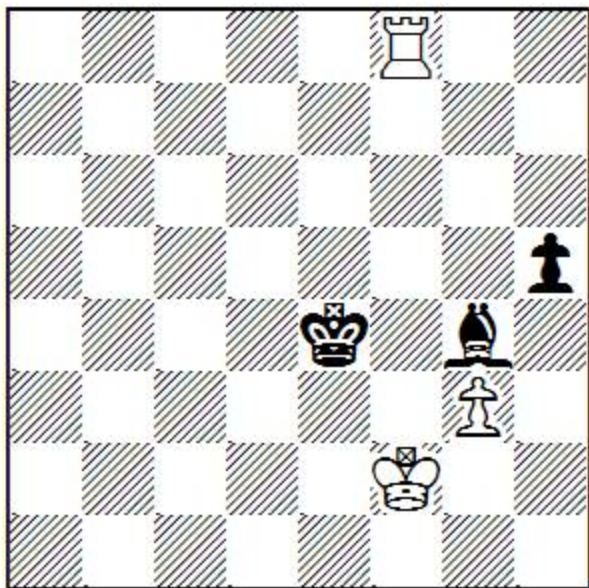
A key game in the battle for first place was the one with Tal. It was adjourned in an endgame with rook and knight against rook and bishop, in which Korchnoi stood better. The master A.Petersons, a participant in the tournament, recalls: 'Since, on account of illness, Tal had many other "arrears", for a long time the game was not resumed and was at the centre of the attention of both the players and the numerous fans. Initially the opinion was that White should win. But here Black's interests began to be defended by none other than Tigran Petrosian, who suggested that the most probable outcome was a draw. The Riga players who were in Kiev – Tal, Koblents, Klovans and Petersons – spent many hours analysing the adjourned position and also came to the conclusion that the game should end in a draw.'

On the resumption Korchnoi won the exchange by force, but Tal resisted desperately, pinning his hopes on the extremely limited material remaining. The crux came on the 68th move.

Game 11

V.Korchnoi-M.Tal

32nd USSR Championship, Kiev 1964/65, 9th round



68 ... Bh3?

Allowing the white king to escape. After 68 ... Kd3 Black would have gained a draw, for example: 69 Re8 Kd4 70 Ke1 Kd3 71 Re7 Bf3 (Petersons).

69 Ke2! Bg4+ 70 Kd2 Bf5 71 Rf7 Bg4 72 Rf4+ Ke5 73 Ke3 Be6 74 Rf8 Bh3 75 Ra8 Kf5 76 Ra5+ Kg6 77 Kf4 h4 (if 77 ... Bf1, then 78 Rg5+ Kh6 79 Rd5, followed by Rd6+ and Kg5) 78 Ra6+ Kg7 79 gxh4, and Black resigned on the 93rd move.

Also important was the game with the Moscow grandmaster Vasyukov, a player with a sharp attacking style, who played only 1 e4. It need hardly be said that in reply Korchnoi chose his favourite French Defence. After a mistake on the 12th move he ended up in a difficult position, but according to the evidence of the press, 'as usual, he maintained enviable composure, unexpectedly seized the initiative, and the situation instantly changed in his favour.'

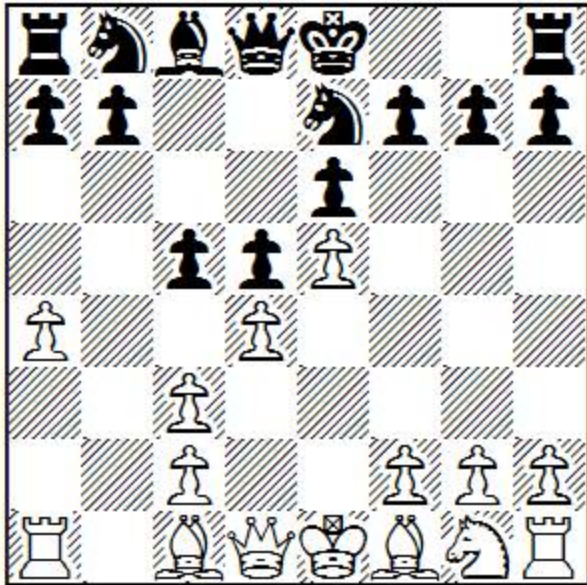
Game 12

E.Vasyukov-V.Korchnoi

32nd USSR Championship, Kiev 1964/65, 10th round

French Defence C19

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 Nc3 Bb4 4 e5 c5 5 a3 Bxc3+ 6 bxc3 Ne7 7 a4



Here, as in the 7 Nf3 variation, Korchnoi's practical and creative results are no worse than after 7 Qg4 (*Game Nos.3, 14 and 27*). Although the opening did not always turn out in his favour, he masterfully maintained the tension in the complicated 'French' middlegame.

7 ... Nbc6 8 Nf3 Bd7

Later, following the example set by Korchnoi, 8 ... Qa5! became almost automatic, forcing 9 Qd2 (*Game No.22*) or 9 Bd2 (*Game No.23*).

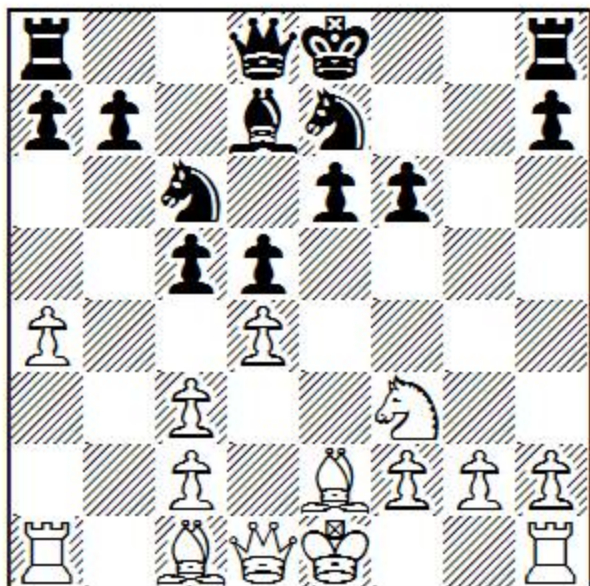
9 Be2 (Fischer preferred 9 Bd3 – *Volume 4, Game No.95*) **9 ... f6?!**

A typical undermining move, although, as practice has shown, it is better carried out slightly later, when the white bishop (or queen) has taken up a relatively passive position at d2. True, 9 ... Qa5 can now be met by 10 0-0!, since after 10 ... Qxc3?! 11 Bd2 Qb2 12 Rb1 Qa3 13 Rxb7 White seizes the initiative.

In those years they often played 9 ... Qc7 10 0-0 f6 (instead of the old 10 ... b6 11 Ba3 Na5 Tolush-Botvinnik, Moscow 1943/44) 11 exf6 gxf6 12 c4, but 12 Ba3! is stronger: 12 ... c4 (12 ... cxd4?! 13 Nxd4) 13 Qd2, or 13 Re1 and Bf1, probing the 'holes' in the opponent's position and relying on the power of the bishop at a3. White is promised less by

12 dxc5 e5! 13 c4 Be6 14 cxd5 Nxd5 15 Nd2 0-0-0 16 Ne4 Nc3! 17 Nd6+ Qxd6 18 cxd6 Nxd1 19 Rxd1 Nd4 with equality (Panchenko-Bagirov, Chelyabinsk 1972).

10 exf6 gxf6



11 dxc5

To me, it seems more promising to play 11 0-0! Qc7 12 Ba3 (cf. the previous note), while if 11 ... Qa5, then 12 Ba3 or 12 c4, and it is hard for Black to create counterplay compensating for the weakened position of his king.

11 ... Qa5

11 ... Qc7 12 Nd4! was less good for Black, but he could have considered 11 ... e5!? 12 Nh4 (12 0-0 Qc7!, as in the aforementioned Panchenko-Bagirov game) 12 ... Qa5 13 Bh5+ Kd8, planning ... Kc7, ... Rag8 and ... Kb8 with sharp play.

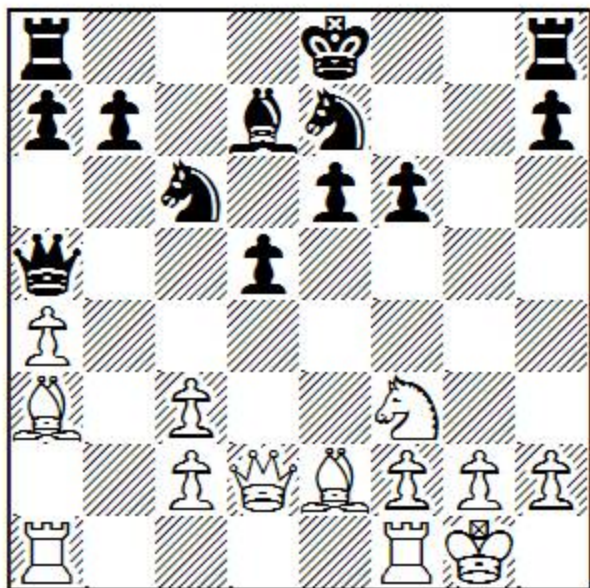
12 Qd2?!

A loss of a tempo, leading to one of the lines with 8 ... Qa5. 12 0-0! is more accurate, when it is dangerous for Black to play either 12 ... Qxc5? 13 Qd2 and Ba3!, or 12 ... Qxc3?! 13 Rb1 0-0-0 (13 ... Qxc5 14 Rxb7) 14 Bb2 Qxc5 15 Bxf6 Rhf8 16 Rb5 Qd6 17 Bh4. And if 12 ... e5 White can fight for an advantage by 13 c4 Be6 (13 ... dxc4 or 13 ... d4 – 14 Nd2!) 14 cxd5 Nxd5 15 Bd2 Qxc5 16 c4 etc.

12 ... Qxc5?

Now White's dark-squared bishop becomes terribly strong and Korchnoi's position becomes critical. Subsequently Black has achieved reasonable results by playing 12 ... 0-0-0 or 12 ... e5.

13 Ba3 Qa5 14 0-0



It is obvious that sooner or later c3-c4 will follow and Black will face a gruelling struggle for a draw: his pawn structure is broken, and in addition White has two formidable bishops. But it is interesting to follow how Korchnoi, deeply and creatively delving into the secrets of the position, solves his difficult problems and gradually, albeit not without the 'help' of his opponent, creates dangerous counterplay.

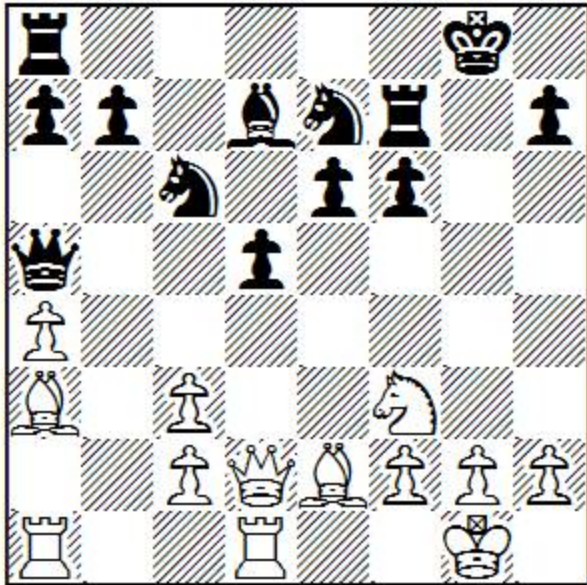
14 ... 0-0

Black has to restrict himself to kingside castling: if 14 ... 0-0-0 White has the unpleasant 15 Nd4! (with the threat of Nb5) 15 ... Nxd4 16 Bxe7 Nxe2+ 17 Qxe2 Rde8 18 Bxf6 Rhg8 19 Be5 and the counterattack on the g-file is too late, while if 14 ... e5, then 15 Rfb1 0-0 16 Rb5 Qc7 17 Rab1.

15 Rfd1?!

A delay. 15 c4 Qxd2 16 Nxd2 also achieves little, but after 15 Rfb1! 'Black is in considerable difficulties' (Petersons), for example: 15 ... Qc7 16 Nd4!, or 15 ... Bc8 16 Rb5 Qc7 17 c4 .

15 ... Rf7



16 c4

'I would have rather gone into a lion's cage than exchanged queens with White in this position,' Tal joked in later analysis, suggesting 16 Qc1 'if there is nothing better'. Indeed, after 16 ... Qxc3 17 Rd3 Qa5 18 Nh4 or 17 Bb2 Qa5 18 c4 White has good compensation for the pawn, and therefore 16 ... e5 17 c4 Be6 is better, with a complicated game.

16 ... Qxd2 (16 ... Rc8 was more cunning, but then White could have kept the queens on by 17 c3) 17 Rxd2 Rc8 (17 ... Na5!?) 18 a5 Ng6 19 a6! b6 20 Rad1?

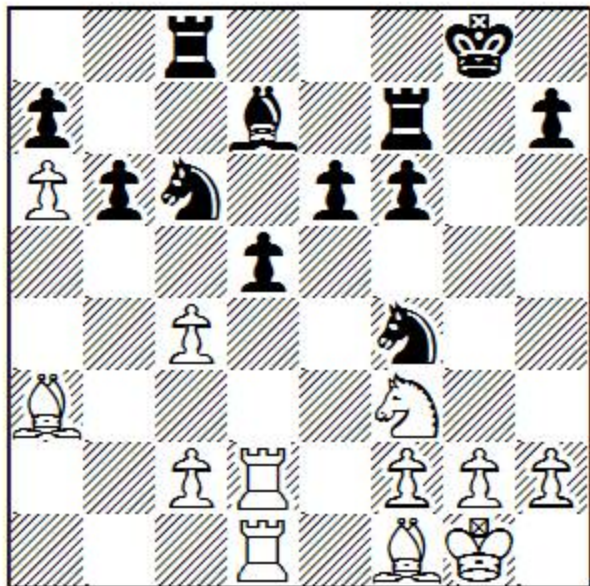
A seemingly natural move, but the black knight should not have been allowed to go to f4. However, 20 g3 (Petersons) is repulsed by 20 ... dxc4 21 Rad1 (21 Bxc4 Nce5 with equality) 21 ... Nb8! etc.

And only the timely 20 cxd5! exd5 21 g3 (but not 21 Rxd5?! Nf4 22 Rd2 Nxe2+ 23 Rxe2 Bg4!, or 21 c4?! Na5!), as well as 21 Bd6(b2) or the subtle 21 Re1, would have condemned Black to a difficult defence: his d5-pawn is very weak, and any attack on the a7-pawn, 'nailed' to the board by the a6-pawn, may prove fatal for him.

20 ... Nf4 21 Bf1

21 cxd5 is no longer so clear: 21 ... exd5 22 Bd6 (22 Bf1?! Bg4!, and the rook at d1 is badly placed) 22 ... Nxe2+ 23 Rxe2 Rd8 and ... Bc8!, extracting the 'nail' at a6.

Nevertheless, it appears that White still has the initiative (he is threatening g2-g3 and cxd5). At any event, Korchnoi thought for nearly 50 minutes here. And, as the fans said at the time, he 'did a Korchnoi':



21 ... e5!?

A non-standard positional pawn sacrifice, all the more unexpected for the reason that 21 ... Na5 was perfectly acceptable: after 22 g3 (22 cxd5 Nxd5 is equal) 22 ... Nxc4! 23 Bxc4 Rxc4 24 gxf4 Rxf4 Black has good compensation for the piece (he is threatening also to pick up the a6-pawn), while if 22 Bd6 there can follow 22 ... Nxc4 (22 ... e5!?) 23 Bxf4 Nxd2 24 Rxd2 e5 25 Bh6(g3) Be6, when the rook and pawn are no weaker than the bishop and knight. However, Korchnoi is striving not to equalise, but to seize the initiative!

22 cxd5 Na5

The picture has changed sharply. Instead of doubled c-pawns, White now has an extra passed pawn at d5 – and nevertheless the position is completely unclear. This pawn has blocked the frontal action of the rooks, saving Black from pressure on the d-file. He is threatening ... Nc4 (a favourite post for Korchnoi's knights – especially in the Grünfeld Defence), and after the exchange of the bishop for this knight, the a6-pawn will be attacked by the rook from a4 or by the bishop from b5(c8) – and it will become a weakness. In addition, threats along the g-file may arise.

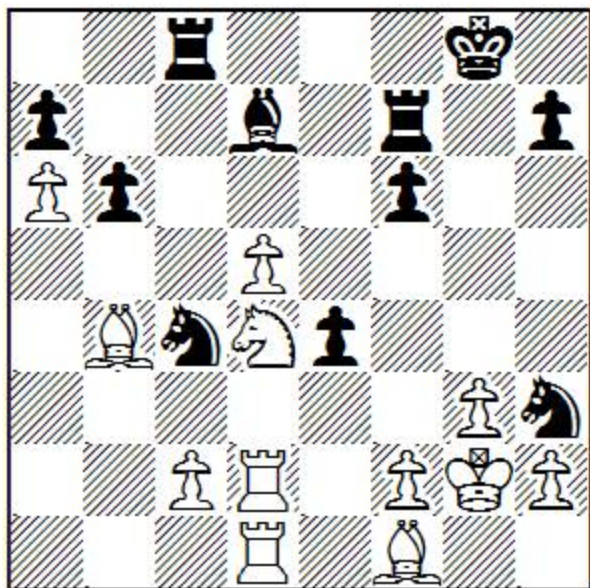
23 g3 (a normal move: in any case Black has fair compensation for the pawn – this is even ‘felt’ by the machine) 23 ... Nh3+

23 ... Bg4!? was also possible. The complex combination of different factors – both strategic, and tactical – makes White’s position rather dangerous. From the practical viewpoint, at any event, on the threshold of a sharp time scramble.

24 Kg2 Nc4 25 Bb4?!

A difficult choice – an attempt to fight for the initiative! ‘Vasyukov decided to sacrifice the exchange, so as not to weaken the light squares.’ (Petersons). But perhaps he should have been patient and played 25 Bxc4 Rxc4 26 Bb2 Bg4 27 Re1!? However, the weaknesses in White’s position would have promised Black a fully equal game.

25 ... e4!? (25 ... Nxd2! 26 Rxd2 Rg7 or 26 ... h6, was better, permitting ... Ng5, with some advantage to Black, but Korchnoi was tempted by another, very interesting idea) 26 Nd4



26 ... Nxf2! (a pretty stroke; neither 27 Rxf2? Ne3+ nor 27 Kxf2? e3+ is possible) 27 Re1!

Vasyukov found a strong reply, giving White sufficient compensation for the exchange.

27 ... Nxd2

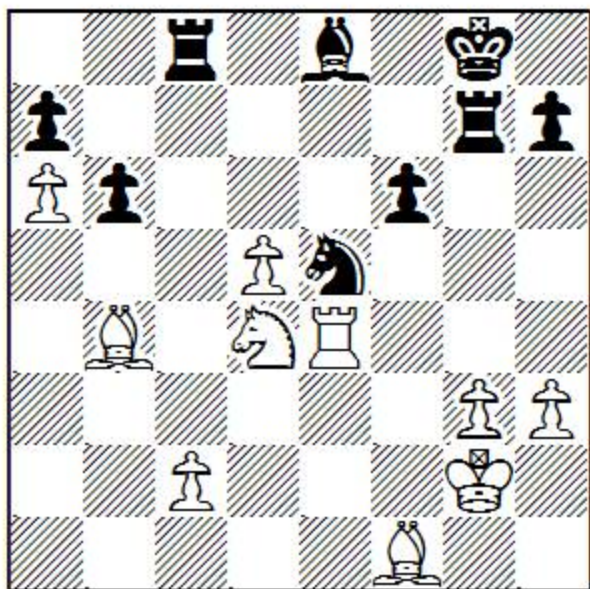
‘27 ... e3 was possibly stronger’ (Petersons), but after 28 Rxf2 exf2 29 Kxf2 Ne5 30 h3 White has a good game. 27 ... Ng4 28 Bxc4 Rxc4

29 c3 f5 would have maintained approximate equality.

28 Bxd2 Ng4 (the somewhat unexpected 28 ... Nh3 was hardly any stronger: 29 Rxe4 Ng5 30 Rh4 Re7 31 Bd3! Re5 32 d6 – 32 c4 b5! – 32 ... Rd5 33 Bb4) 29 Rxe4

It has to be admitted that the exchange of the f2-pawn for the e-pawn has probably proved more beneficial to White. The subsequent events took place in time-trouble.

29 ... Ne5 30 Bb4 Rg7 31 h3 (31 c3!? with the idea of 31 ... Rg4 32 Re1) 31 ... Be8



32 c4?!

Condemning this pawn to death. Approximate equality would have been retained by 32 Rf4 Bg6 33 c3 Nd3 34 Bxd3 Bxd3 35 Nc6. It was also possible to support the bishop at b4 immediately by 32 c3 (Petersons), for example: 32 ... Bf7 (32 ... Bg6 33 Re3 or 32 ... Rd7 33 d6 Bf7 34 Rf4 is no better for Black) 33 Ne6 Bxe6 34 dxe6 Re8 35 e7 Rgxe7 36 Bxe7 Rxe7, and the weakness of the a7-pawn demands a certain accuracy of Black on the way to a draw.

32 ... Bg6 33 Re1?

A second successive mistake. Petersons' recommendation 33 Re3 is also dubious in view of 33 ... Nxc4 34 Rc3 Be4+ and ... Bxd5. It was essential to play 33 Rf4 Nxc4 34 Kf2, and although after 34 ... Ne5 35

Rxf6 Rf7 36 Rxf7 Kxf7 37 Ke3 White is a little worse, he can hope for a draw.

33 ... **Bd3** (now Black wins material, and with it the game) 34 **Ne6 Rd7**

A solid move in time-trouble. There was a quicker win by the flamboyant 34 ... **Rxc4!** 35 **Nxg7** (35 **Bxd3 Nxd3**) 35 ... **Rc2+** 36 **Kh1** (36 **Be2 Bxe2**) 36 ... **Nf3!** with the threat of ... **Rh2** mate or ... **Nxe1**.

35 **Bc3 Bxc4** 36 **Bxe5?** (Vasyukov had already lost heart: 36 **Bxc4 Nxc4** 37 **Nf4** was a tougher defence) 36 ... **Bxd5+** 37 **Kg1 fxe5** 38 **Rxe5 Bxe6** 39 **Rxe6 Rc1** 40 **Kg2 Rd2+** 41 **Be2 Kf7** 42 **Re4 Rc6** 43 **Kf1**, and here, having checked that the time control had been passed, White resigned (0-1).

As a result Viktor Lvovich brilliantly won his third gold medal: 1. Korchnoi – 15 out of 19 (+11=8); 2. Bronstein – 13; 3. Tal – 12½; 4. Stein – 12, etc. And if his unconditional victory in the semi-final, the Leningrad Championship, is added to this, it gives an impressive unbeaten series – 30 out of 36!

‘Korchnoi’s splendid achievement in the semi-final was evidently not considered by some to be anything outstanding, but all chess fans unanimously acknowledged that in the final the Leningrad grandmaster was truly wonderful. He finished two points ahead of his nearest rival – the only player to achieve such a margin in USSR Championships was Botvinnik 20 years ago,’ A.Petersons enthusiastically wrote in the Riga magazine *Shakhmaty*.

And in the magazine *Shakhmaty v SSSR* he was echoed by B.Baranov and V.Mikenas:

‘Korchnoi has caught up with Keres as regards the number of USSR Championship gold medals. Only Botvinnik has more ... Korchnoi has to his credit both spectacular and combinations and fine attacks, as well as consistently conducted positional games and subtle endgames. Whereas Petrosian manoeuvres for a long time, awaiting the moment for decisive action, while Tal pursues the same aim using tactical means, Korchnoi skilfully combines both these methods in his play.

‘He often gives up his own active plans and allows the opponent to carry out his ideas, if he sees flaws in them, in order to land a timely counterblow. Perhaps it is this detail that has enabled Korchnoi to discern the incorrectness of many of Tal’s attacks and to gain an overwhelming advantage in their individual meetings.

‘Korchnoi plays the opening unpretentiously, aiming for a complicated position that is to his taste. And he happily accepts

sacrifices, although sometimes his decisions appear outwardly dubious. But it should be born in mind that the Leningrad player goes in for such positions only when his fine intuition, together with his rapid and deep calculation, suggest to him that the opponent's ideas can be refuted. In short, Korchnoi is a subtle psychologist, who is able to recognise his opponent's strong and weak points and direct the play along lines that suit him.'

It was after this national championship that Soviet chess officials first drew attention to the vacuum of star players that arose in the 1960s. 'We must dwell especially on the fact that among the participants there were no young players,' wrote the chess press. 'It is a cheerless paradox that the "youngest" player in the tournament was the 28-year-old former world champion Tal. What is the reason for this alarming fact? Apparently, that we work badly with our chess youth, that we demand little from them, and that we do insufficient to instil fighting qualities in our young players.'

The real reason for the lack of new superstars, the enormous 'black hole' from Tal and Spassky to Karpov, came to light later: at least two generations were lost to chess on account of the Second World War ...

It seems to me that in the USSR they 'worked badly' not so much with the youth, as with certain well-known grandmasters, periodically not sending them to foreign tournaments. Korchnoi was no exception – even with all his titles! Thus in 1963 he and Keres were invited to the Piatigorsky Cup in Los Angeles, but world champion Petrosian also wanted to go there. Then the organisers sent three tickets ... 'And even so I was not sent,' remembers Korchnoi. 'Petrosian's wife went to the USA on my ticket.'

In the spring of 1965 the three-times national champion was invited to a strong tournament in Zagreb in Yugoslavia, but instead of this the Sports Committee suggested that he should travel to a small tournament in Hungary. Of course, Korchnoi refused ... True, in August he nevertheless visited Hungary and achieved an absolute record result in the Asztalos Memorial tournament – 14½ out of 15! He also scored a significant victory at an international tournament in the autumn in Erevan: 1. Korchnoi – 9½ out of 13; 2-3. Petrosian and Stein – 8½, etc.

At the conclusion of the European Team Championship (Hamburg, June 1965) he was unexpectedly invited to remain in the West. He declined, replying that 'chess players in the USSR are very privileged people'. But later, after he had left, he lamented: 'Eleven years of

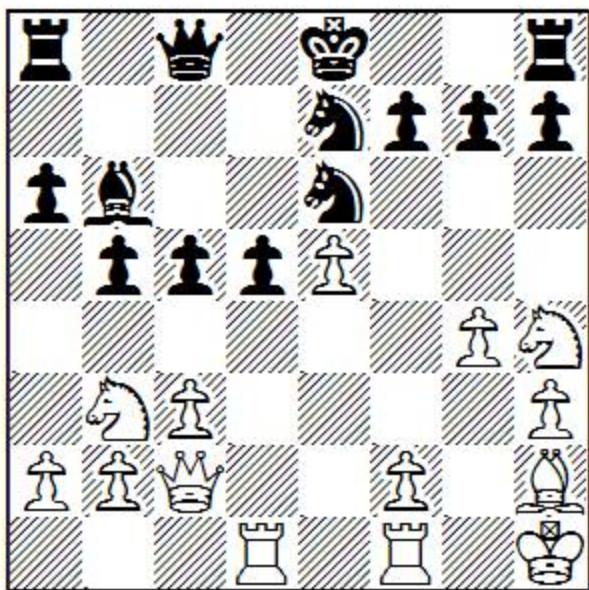
normal life were lost.’ It cannot be denied that a lack of opportunities to take part in worthy tournaments is very damaging to any outstanding player who is at the height of his powers. And so in 1965, by his own admission, Korchnoi had reached the end of his tether: ‘I decided to join the Communist Party – as a last chance of easing my lot. And indeed, initially it helped.’

A great stir was caused at that time by Korchnoi’s double win over Petrosian in the traditional Moscow-Leningrad match (Moscow, November 1965). After adjourning the first game in a complicated middlegame, the two players began the second the following day. Tigran Vartanovich began with 1 e4 – a rare instance! ‘Obviously, preparing for the coming match for the world championship, he was aiming to broaden his opening repertoire,’ decided Korchnoi, who replied with the Open Variation of the Ruy Lopez. After White’s 21st move a sharp situation arose.

Game 13

T.Petrosian-V.Korchnoi

Moscow v. Leningrad Match, 1965



‘Here I thought for half an hour,’ writes Korchnoi. ‘How to parry the knight move to f5? If 21 ... g6 there follows 22 f4 with the practically forced continuation 22 ... h5 23 f5 hxg4 24 fxe6 Rxh4. In my mind I

returned several times to this critical position. Black appears to have an attack, but the position did not appeal to me because of its 'irrationality', the fact that it was impossible to decide whom it favoured. And yet I realised that after other continuations White would have an advantage. In a chess player's thinking, a major role is played by psychological factors. He is often guided not by objective evaluations, but his own subjective feelings, those that he can allow himself. Tal would definitely have gone in for this continuation, but I avoided it, because the character of the resulting play was not to my taste. After lengthy thought, hesitations and doubts, I answered differently.'

21 ... Qc6 22 f4 (22 Nf5 h5!) 22 ... d4+ 23 Qg2 Qxg2+ 24 Nxb2 dxc3 with a complicated ending. Things ended in a time scramble, where the last mistake was made by Petrosian. 'In his games with me the nerves of the great strategist often let him down.' This remark says everything about Korchnoi's character!

The game was adjourned in a rook ending that was hopeless for White, and on the resumption he resigned within a few moves. That same day Korchnoi also won the second game. The master A.Geller recalls: 'Viktor gained particular satisfaction from the analysis of games. During the double-round Moscow-Leningrad match on 40 boards, the leader of the visiting team, who had two adjournments with Petrosian, spent a sleepless night analysing several dozen adjourned games of his team-mates, which, however, did not prevent him from winning his two games against the world champion the following morning. Generally speaking, during analysis Korchnoi had the ability to instantly "cut into" the position and quickly find the strongest reply – in this sense he is similar to Alekhine.'

Of Korchnoi's tournament performances in 1966 the most memorable were his victories in Bucharest (12½ out of 14!), in the Chigorin Memorial in Sochi (11½ out of 15), and the best result on the first reserve board at the Olympiad in Havana (10½ out of 13). As usual, he was assisted by the French Defence – for Viktor the Terrible this is truly an opening for all times! The following game gives a good illustration of his manner of play.

Game 14

D.Minic-V.Korchnoi

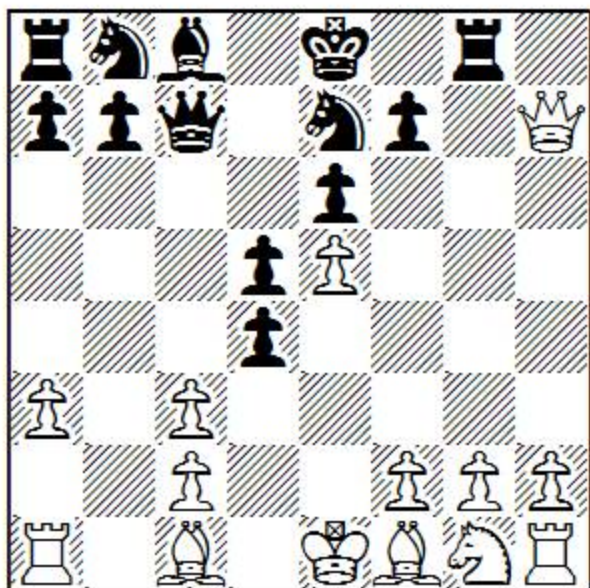
Bucharest 1966, 5th round

French Defence C18

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 Nc3 Bb4 4 e5 c5 5 a3 Bxc3+ 6 bxc3 Ne7 7 Qg4 (7 a4 – *Game Nos. 12, 22 and 23*) 7 ... Qc7

The sacrifice of the g7- and h7-pawns is undoubtedly more in keeping with Korchnoi's creative credo than 7 ... Nf5 (*Game No. 3*). However, against Minic a year later in the Yugoslavia-USSR match (Budva 1967) he chose the solid 7 ... 0-0! 8 Nf3 (nowadays White's hopes are associated with 8 Bd3!?) 8 ... Nbc6 9 Bd3 f5 10 exf6 Rxf6 11 Bg5 (11 Qh5?! h6 12 0-0 c4! 13 Be2 Qa5 14 Bd2 Bd7 15 Rfb1 Qc7 leads to equality, Mecking-Korchnoi, Wijk aan Zee 1978) 11 ... Rf7 12 Qh5 g6 and the players agreed a draw, although after 13 Qh4 c4 14 Be2 Qa5 15 Bd2 Nf5 16 Qg5 Bd7 the position is still full of fight (Ljubojevic-Korchnoi, Linares 1985).

8 Qxg7 Rg8 9 Qxh7 cxd4



Black declares his readiness to launch a counterattack at the first opportunity. A very sharp position has arisen, where neither king feels entirely comfortable and the borders between defence and attack are blurred. And those who go in for these complications (irrespective of whether with White or Black) take on a considerable strategic risk.

10 Kd1

An original if bizarre move, the fashion for which was set by Tal in the 1st game of his 1960 match with Botvinnik (true, there it was 6 ...

Qc7 7 Qg4 f5 8 Qg3 Ne7 9 Qxg7 Rg8 10 Qxh7 cxd4 11 Kd1!? that occurred – *Volume 2, Game No.127*) and then also by Bronstein. White wants to play Nf3 and then a possible Ng5, in contrast to the usual variation with 10 Ne2 Nbc6 11 f4 (*Game No.27*).

10 ... Nbc6!

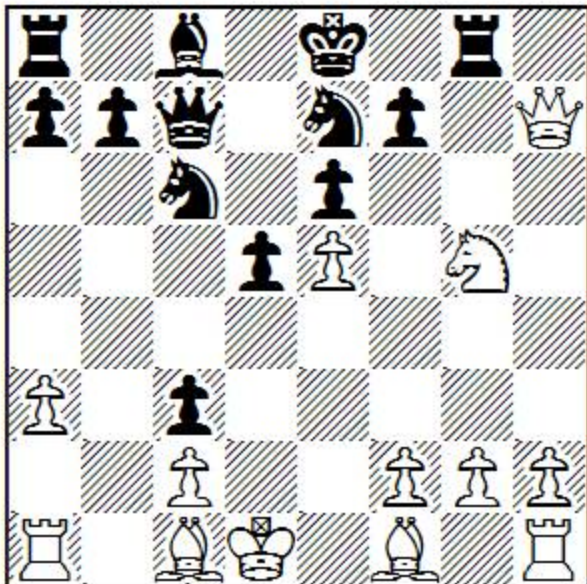
10 ... Nd7 11 Nf3 narrows Black's choice to 11 ... Nxe5 (cf. the following note), since he can hardly equalise with 11 ... Nc5 12 Ng5 or 11 ... Nf8 12 Qd3 dxc3 (12 ... Qxc3? 13 Qxd4) 13 Rb1 etc.

11 Nf3 dxc3

Avoiding the dangerous variation 11 ... Nxe5 12 Bf4 Qxc3 13 Nxe5 Qxa1+ 14 Bc1 d3!? (14 ... Rf8 15 Bd3 Bd7 16 Ke2 is also unclear, Tal-Bronstein, rapidplay match, Moscow 1967) 15 Qxf7+ Kd8 16 Qf6! dxc2+ 17 Kd2 Qd4+ 18 Bd3 Ke8? 19 Ke2! Bd7 20 Be3 Qb2 21 Rc1 Rc8 22 Nxd7 and wins (Bronstein-Uhlmann, Zagreb 1965). It was only 20 years later that the best defence was found – 18 ... Qc5! (B.Stein-Beliavsky, London 1985).

12 Ng5!?

An attempted improvement. The game Minic-Ivkov (Titograd 1965) went 12 Rb1 Bd7 13 Bg5 0-0-0 with equality, while after 12 Bf4 (Kuijpers-Padevsky, Moscow 1963) there is the good reply 12 ... Qb6!



12 ... Rf8

A comparatively modest reply. Unclear, irrational play results after 12 ... Qxe5 13 Qxf7+ Kd7 (but not 13 ... Kd8? 14 Qxg8+ Nxg8 15 Nf7+ and Nxe5, Minic-Zinn, Halle Zonal 1967) or 12 ... Nxe5 13 f4 (13 Bf4 Qb6!) 13 ... Rxc5!? (13 ... f6 has also been played) 14 fxc5 N5g6 and 15 ... e5!, and the powerful pawn centre, together with the sorry position of the enemy king, gives Black every reason for optimism (Adorjan-Portisch, Hungarian Championship 1966), as well as the newly fashionable 12 ... Nd8!? 13 f4 Bd7 (Short-Neelotpal, Dhaka 1999).

The move in the game allows White to defend his e5-pawn, bring back his queen and pick up the c3-pawn, with his knight not at e2, but at g5, which is obviously more promising. But, on the other hand, the white king, having moved to d1, can no longer take shelter on the kingside and Black has a plan involving queenside castling and the rapid opening up of the centre.

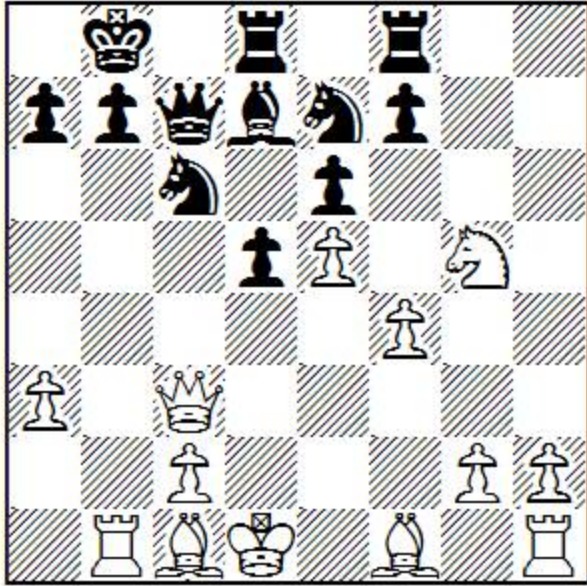
13 f4 Bd7 14 Qd3

Little is promised by 14 Bd3 Qb6 (O'Kelly-Pietzsch, Havana 1965). At the board Korchnoi thought that 14 Rb1 would have been more unpleasant for him; to this they later replied 14 ... Na5 (Pietrusiak-Uhlmann, Halle Zonal 1967).

14 ... 0-0-0 (not 14 ... Nd8?! or 14 ... d4?! on account of 15 Nh7) **15 Qxc3 Kb8**

The immediate 15 ... d4!? 16 Qc5 Nd5 and ... f7-f6 was perhaps better.

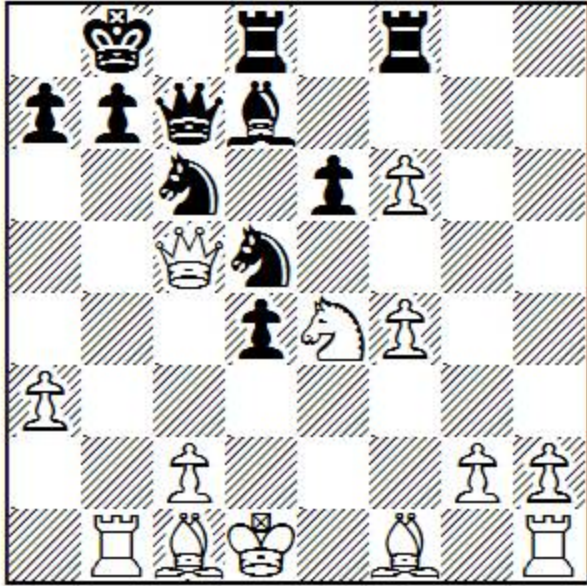
16 Rb1 (16 a4!? Korchnoi)



16 ... d4 17 Qc5 Nd5 18 Ne4?!

'Now Black has roughly equal chances. 18 Bd2 should have been played.' (Korchnoi). White would have been threatening to play Kc1 and Bd3 and to begin the conversion of his extra pawn. And if 18 ... f6, then 19 Nh7 (with gain of tempo!) 19 ... Rf7 20 Nxf6 Nxf6 21 exf6 Rxf6 22 g4!? e5 (after 22 ... Rxf4? there is the dagger-blow 23 Ba6!) 23 f5 etc.

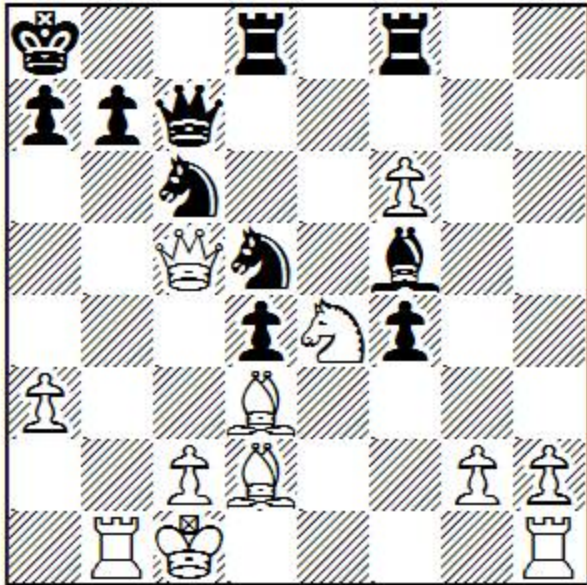
18 ... f6 (successfully carrying out his plan) **19 exf6**



19 ... e5! (not wasting time on 19 ... Nxf6) 20 Bd2

'The only defence against the threat of ... Bf5.' (Korchnoi). 20 Ba6 b6 would not have changed anything. White's position in the centre begins to 'crumble' slightly: it is hard for his king to find a secure shelter.

20 ... Bf5 21 Bd3 exf4 22 Kc1 Ka8



23 Re1?

An imperceptible, but serious inaccuracy, which loses an important tempo – the rook is firing into empty space. Both sides would still have had chances after 23 g4 (Korchnoi) with the idea of 23 ... Bxg4 24 Rg1, or 23 Rb5 Bh7 (23 ... Ne3? 24 Ba5!) 24 Rf1, or the immediate 23 Rf1 b6 24 Qc4 Ne3 25 Bxe3 dxe3 26 Qc3.

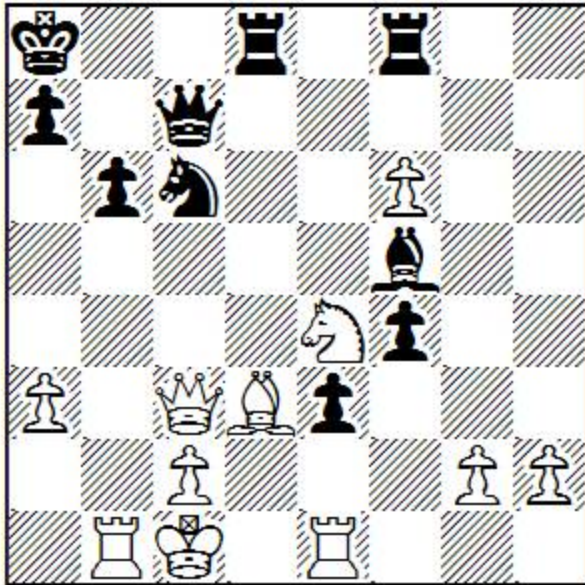
23 ... b6

With the intention of ... Ne3 – such a knight cannot be tolerated, but after the exchange on e3 Black acquires a powerful passed pawn. White is forced to solve some rather difficult problems.

24 Qc4

‘Minic thought that this move was the decisive mistake,’ writes Korchnoi, ‘but after 24 Qb5 Ne5 Black has a clear advantage.’ And indeed, 25 Nc5 Nxd3+ 26 Nxd3 Rxf6 does not bring any relief, while if 25 Kb2, then 25 ... Ne3!

24 ... Ne3 25 Bxe3 dxe3 26 Qc3



26 ... Qd7!

Korchnoi builds up his initiative with strong and natural moves. The tempting 26 ... Rfe8 would have allowed the activation of the rook – 27 Rb4! (27 Nc5 Re5! 28 Na6 Qd6 is less good for White) 27 ... Rc8 28 Rc4 with the idea of 28 ... Be6 29 Rxc6! Qxc6 30 Qxc6+ Rxc6 31 Bb5 Bd5 32 Nc3! Bxg2 33 Ne2 with equality. Things are also not altogether clear after 28 ... b5!? 29 f7! bxc4 30 fxe8Q Rxe8 31 Qxc4 Rb8 (31 ... Qb6 32 Nc5!; 31 ... Rc8 32 Qc3!) 32 Nc3 Qd6 33 Nb5 Qf6 34 Qc3, aiming for the exchange of queens.

27 Rf1

27 g3 looks more cunning, when the simple-minded 27 ... Rc8? runs into 28 Nd6! Qxd6 29 Bxf5 with equality. But in this case Black has the good reply 27 ... Rfe8! 28 f7 (not 28 gxf4 Bxe4, or 28 Ng5 Re5! with the threat of ... Rc5, and if 29 Rb5, then 29 ... Bxd3 30 Rxe5 Nxe5 31 Qxe5 Rc8 and wins) 28 ... Rxe4 29 Bxe4 Bxe4 30 gxf4 Qxf7 31 Qxe3 Bf5! with an irresistible attack on the king.

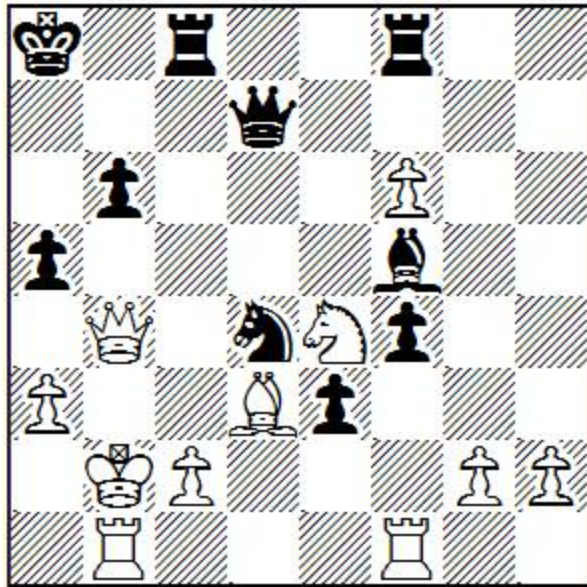
27 ... Rc8! 28 Kb2 (or 28 Rxf4 Ne5 29 Qxe5 Qxd3 30 Rb2 e2 and wins – Korchnoi) **28 ... Nd4**

28 ... Qd5! was simpler, forcing 29 Rxf4 Ne5 30 Qb4 Nxd3+ 31 cxd3 Qe5+ (not 31 ... Be6?! on account of 32 Nc3! Qxg2+ 33 Ka1 Rxc3 34 Qxf8+ Rc8 35 Qxc8+! Bxc8 36 f7 Qg7+ 37 d4 Qf8 38 Rg1! e2 39 Kb2 with equality) 32 Nc3 Bxd3 33 Rc1 Rxf6 with an

overwhelming advantage, or 31 ... Rxf6!! (threatening ... Rfc6, ... Be6 and ... Qxd3) 32 Nxf6 Rc2+! 33 Kxc2 Qxd3+ 34 Kb2 Qxb1+ 35 Kc3 Qd3+ 36 Kb2 Qc2+ 37 Ka1 Qc1+ 38 Ka2 Be6+ with crushing threats.

29 Qb4 a5

This is also very pretty and sets White virtually insoluble problems.



It stands to reason that after 1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 Korchnoi has regularly faced not only 3 Nc3 (about two hundred times), but also 3 Nd2 (about a hundred times). After this he has tried both 3 ... Nc6 and 3 ... Nf6, but most often he has played 3 ... c5 and incurred an isolated d5-pawn. In the following classic game he convincingly demonstrates Black's main trump in such positions – active piece play, even without the queens.

Game 15

A.Matanovic-V.Korchnoi

Wijk aan Zee 1968, 2nd round

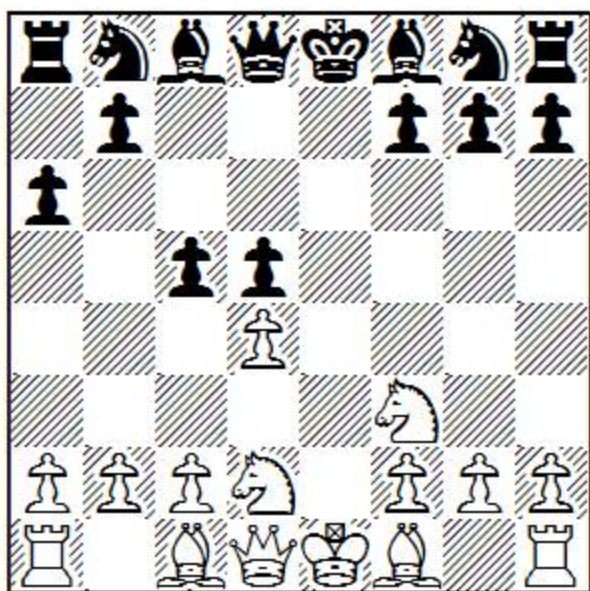
French Defence C08

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 Nd2 c5 4 exd5 exd5 5 Ngf3

5 Bb5+ Bd7 has also occurred over 20 times in Korchnoi's games – for example, in the 16th and 22nd games of his match with Karpov (Baguio 1978).

5 ... a6

Sometimes Korchnoi replied 5 ... Nf6 or 5 ... c4, but mainly 5 ... Nc6 6 Bb5 Bd6 (plus the experimental 6 ... cxd4 7 Qe2+ Qe7 or 6 ... Qe7+) 7 0-0 Nge7 8 dxc5 Bxc5 9 Nb3 Bd6 (the first match with Karpov, Moscow 1974) or 9 ... Bb6 – against Anand (London rapidplay 1994) and McShane (Reykjavik 2003). An entire epoch!



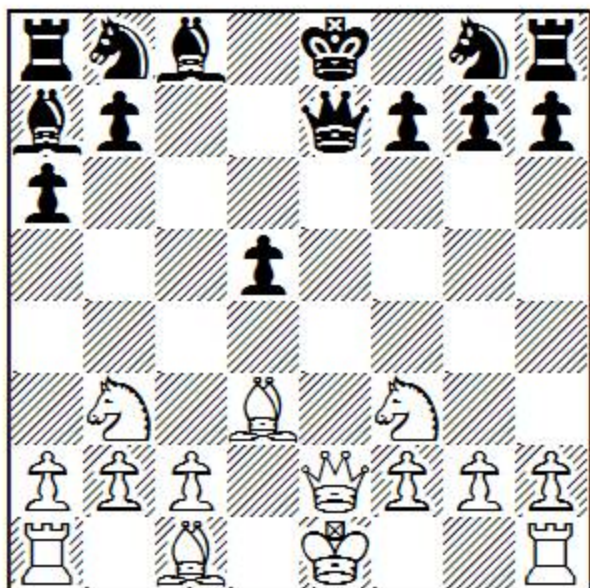
6 dxc5 (Geller and Tal preferred 6 Be2!) 6 ... Bxc5 7 Nb3 Ba7! 8 Bd3

We should also mention 8 Bg5 Ne7 9 Qe2 Nbc6 10 0-0-0 0-0 11 Qd2 Bf5 12 Nfd4 Nxd4 13 Nxd4 Bxd4 14 Qxd4 Rc8 15 Bd3 f6 (Stein-Korchnoi, Moscow 1967), or 8 Be2 Nf6 9 0-0 Nc6 10 Bg5 0-0 11 c3 Re8 12 Nbd4 Qd6 (Estevez-Korchnoi, Leningrad Interzonal 1973), in each case with equality.

8 ... Qe7+!

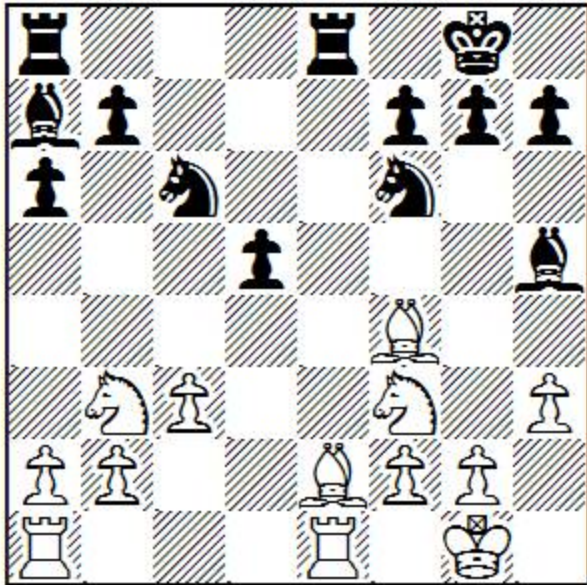
This was played back in 1950 by László Szabó. 'Here I think that Matanovic was genuinely surprised: it is hard to believe that Black, with an isolated d5-pawn, is himself offering the exchange of queens ... ' (Korchnoi). Especially since a previous duel between the same opponents (Havana Olympiad 1966) went 8 ... Nc6 9 0-0 with a slight advantage for White.

9 Qe2



Or 9 Be2 Nf6 10 0-0 0-0 11 Nfd4 (11 Bg5!? Keres) 11 ... Nc6 12 Re1 Ne4 13 Be3 Ne5 14 Nd2 f5 with equality (Ciric-Korchnoi, Yugoslavia-USSR match, Budva 1967).

9 ... Nc6 10 0-0 Bg4 11 h3 Bh5 12 Bf4 Qxe2 13 Bxe2 Nf6 14 c3 0-0 15 Rfe1 Rfe8



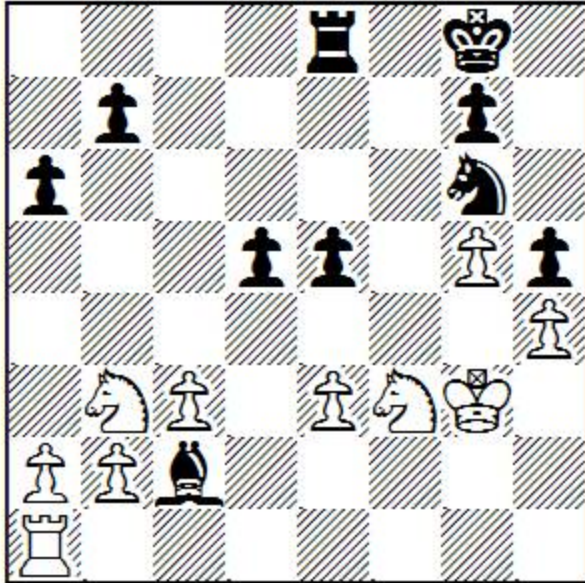
‘It stands to reason that White does not stand worse. But the d5-pawn as though hypnotises Matanovic. After all, in the endgame this is a weakness, a convenient target! And he, thinking that he has an advantage, looks for ways to convert it. Meanwhile, Black does not experience any difficulties. His pieces are harmoniously and actively placed, aimed at the central squares. In such a situation the d5-pawn is not a weakness, but a strength!’ (Korchnoi)

16 g4?!

‘And here is the consequence of White overestimating his chances. Matanovic wants to switch his light-squared bishop to g2, but in so doing he weakens his kingside pawns – subsequently it will be this factor that leads to his defeat,’ writes Korchnoi, adding that after 16 Bf1 he would probably have played 16 ... Re4. Although 16 ... Bxf3 17 gxf3 d4 is simpler, with equality.

16 ... Bg6 17 Bf1 Re4 18 Rxe4 Bxe4 19 Bg2 h5! 20 g5 Nd7 21 Rd1 Nf8 22 Be3 (exchanging the strong bishop at a7) 22 ... Bxe3 23 fxe3 Ne6 24 h4 Re8 25 Kf2 Ne7 26 Bh3 Bc2

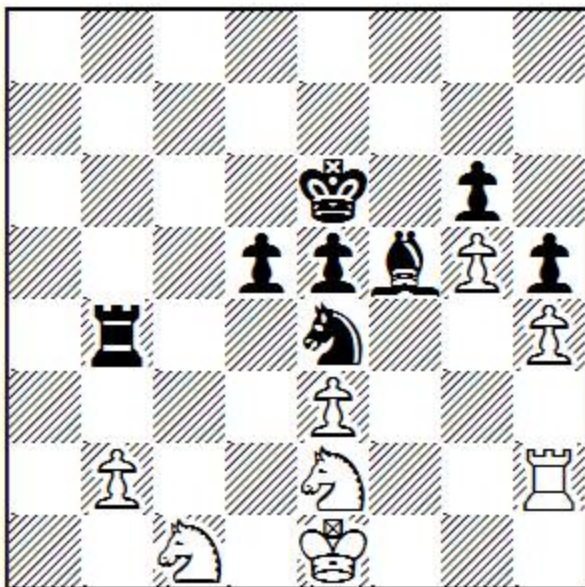
28 ... fxe6 29 Kg3 (after 29 Nc5 Bf5 it is bad to play 30 Nxb7? Rb8, while if 30 Kg3, then simply 30 ... Re7) 29 ... e5



30 Nbd2?!

30 Nc5 offered better chances of a draw.

30 ... Ne7 31 Re1 Nf5+ 32 Kh3 Nd6 33 Kg2 Kf7 34 Nf1 Ke6 35 Ng3 g6 36 Nd2 Rf8 37 Re2 b5 38 Rf2 Bf5 39 Kf1 Rc8 40 Ke1 a5 41 a3 b4 42 axb4 axb4 43 Ne2 Ra8 44 Nb3 Ne4 45 Rh2 Rb8 46 cxb4 Rxb4 47 Nbc1



47 ... Nd6

'This entire stage of the game is of a technical nature. White's position is lost: he is unable to defend his pawn weaknesses.' (Korchnoi)

48 b3 (48 Nc3 Nc4) 48 ... Ne4 49 Ng1 Nc5 50 Kd1 Nxb3, and White resigned on the 66th move (0-1). Korchnoi called this the best of the numerous games played by him in the given variation.

Belief in the solidity of 'French' positions with an isolated d5-pawn is a recurrent theme throughout Korchnoi's career. To some extent he was following the principle of Bronstein, formulated back in the match with Botvinnik (1951): with accurate play the 'isolani' can be held! Indeed, Korchnoi did not lose a single 'French' in his matches with Karpov (1974 and 1978). But objectively it must be said that at times he had to engage in a lengthy and stubborn defence in rather dubious positions. In the chapter on Karpov we will see how subtly the latter handled them for White (*Game Nos.52 and 53*).

Scheveningen Experiences

Korchnoi began the next world championship cycle with the Zonal, 34th USSR Championship (Tbilisi 1966/67). On this occasion he stuck to a purely rational tournament strategy, aiming for one of the four qualifying places. But, despite being undefeated, he did not immediately achieve this objective: 1. Stein – 13 out of 20; 2. Geller – 12½; 3-5. Gipslis, Korchnoi and Taimanov – 12, etc.

To sift out the 'superfluous fifth' an additional double-round match-tournament of three players had to be held (Tallinn 1967). That was a difficult test! Taimanov drew all four of his games, while Korchnoi and Gipslis beat each other, as a result of which all three scored 2 out of 4. The fifth turned out to be Taimanov, who had an inferior coefficient in the main tournament.

However, it could all have turned out differently, since Korchnoi won against Gipslis literally by a miracle. My attention was also drawn to the opening stage of this dramatic game.

Game 16

V.Korchnoi-A.Gipslis

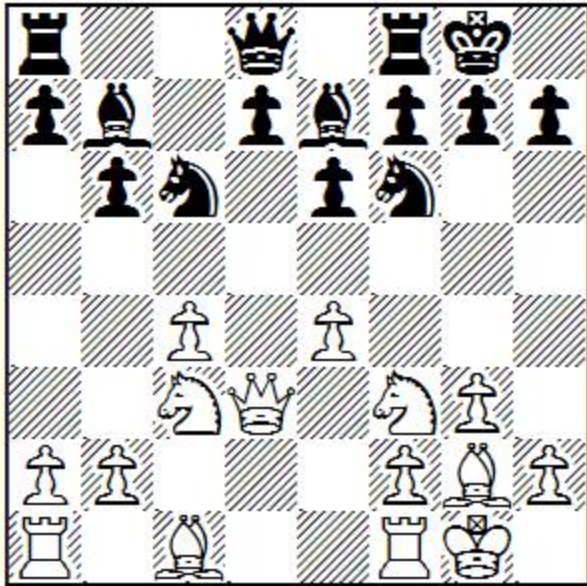
Match-tournament, Tallinn 1967

English Opening A30

1 c4

Playing White, Korchnoi always preferred the closed games, and he normally opened 1 e4 only as an experiment and when he had made purposeful preparations for a specific opponent.

1 ... c5 2 Nf3 Nf6 3 Nc3 e6 4 g3 b6 5 Bg2 Bb7 6 0-0 Be7 7 d4 cxd4 8 Qxd4 0-0 9 e4 Nc6 10 Qd3



10 ... d5

‘Essential, as otherwise Black would have ended up in a cramped position,’ wrote Korchnoi soon after the game, but in 1995 he added: ‘Dozens of present-day players are ready to make a laughing-stock of me for this phrase. Nevertheless, 30 years ago and earlier, masters (whose understanding of chess was hardly inferior to that of modern masters) presented things as follows: “The side who is cramped has difficulty manoeuvring his pieces.” But the founders of the “hedgehog” set-up – which is a fully viable participant in present-day events – modified the formula: “The side who has occupied space has problems with the defence of his outposts.” In the case of the “hedgehog” – with the defence of the c4- and e4-pawns. On occasions I too have played the “hedgehog” – when I have been desperate to win as Black. But in principle both Gipslis and I are players with a classical approach to

chess strategy, and we don't recognise hedgehog insidiousness!' (For more details about the 'hedgehog', see the next volume.)

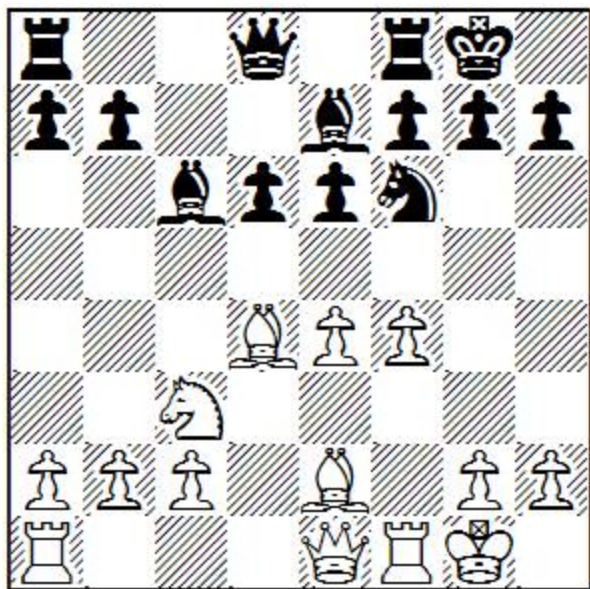
11 e5?! Nd7! 12 cxd5 Nb4 13 Qe4?! Nxd5, and by the 30th move a minor piece ending arose with an extra pawn and winning chances for Gipslis, but in a wild time scramble he did not manage to make his 40th move, the last one before the time control! Regarding this, Korchnoi commented: 'I do not like the formulae, often used by commentators – "crucial game", "war of nerves", "mass of mistakes" – but it is hard to explain otherwise this theatrical parade of minor errors and vexing mistakes, concluding in suicide, or rather – losing on time.'

Very soon Korchnoi brilliantly demonstrated that he had rightfully qualified for the Interzonal tournament. In May 1967, in honour of the 50th anniversary of the October Revolution, the USSR simultaneously staged two major international tournaments – a superstar event in Moscow (won by Stein) and a more modest one in Leningrad. Of course, Viktor Lvovich had every right to play in Moscow, but to 'strengthen the field' they obliged him to play in Leningrad. The effect was impressive: 1. Korchnoi – 13 out of 16 (+10=6); 2. Kholmov – 12; 3-4. Barcza and Taimanov – 10½, etc.

'Korchnoi's score is exceptionally high, but for him this is by no means a rarity,' wrote V.Osnos and P.Kondratiev in the Riga magazine *Shakhmaty*. 'It is well known that competitive form, on which so much depends, cannot remain constant for long. And it has sometimes happened that the outstanding Leningrad grandmaster's greatest successes have been achieved, so to speak, at the "wrong" time. And at the most important moments, i.e. the FIDE qualifying events, he has been "in a recession". Thus in the 34th USSR Championship and the subsequent play-off his performance was only "satisfactory". But in Leningrad Korchnoi's play improved from one round to the next. It is to be hoped that this tendency will prove enduring, and that he will arrive for the forthcoming Interzonal tournament in good form ... Korchnoi has always been faithful to his unusual, inimitable style. A classic example of his creative credo when playing Black (at first defence, if possible with the acquisition of material, and then counterattack) is provided by his game with Suetin.'

The account of this game requires a short introduction. Whereas Korchnoi's contribution to the theory of the French Defence and the Open Variation of the Ruy Lopez is well known, many players, especially the young, do not have the slightest suspicion that he was

responsible for some important developments in the Scheveningen Variation of the Sicilian Defence. Against Kholmov (Moscow Zonal 1964) after 1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 e6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Nf6 5 Nc3 d6 6 Be2 Be7 7 0-0 0-0 8 Be3 Nc6 9 f4 he employed what has long since become a classic plan for the first time – 9 ... Bd7 10 Qe1 Nxd4 11 Bxd4 Bc6.



After 12 Qg3 Black made the key move 12 ... g6. Such a kingside weakening seems inadmissible, but Korchnoi established that it is hard for White to exploit and that Black has sufficient time to set up counterplay on the queenside. In addition, White has a weak pawn at e4 (or, if it should advance, at e5).

Kholmov chose the solid but passive 13 Qe3, and after 13 ... Qa5 14 e5 dxe5 15 fxe5 Nd7 16 Rad1 Bc5 17 Bxc5 Qxc5 18 Qxc5 Nxc5 19 Bf3 Rac8 20 Rd4 Rfd8 21 Rf4 Be8 White had a slightly inferior endgame, but by resourceful defence he managed to save the game. Soon another attempt was made, but it too did not bear fruit: 16 Ne4?! Nxe5 17 Nf6+ Bxf6 18 Rxf6 Nd7! 19 Rf2 e5 20 Bc3 Qb6 21 Qxb6 axb6 ... 0-1 (Parma-Spassky, Belgrade 1964).

Black also has a good game after 13 Bf3 b5! 14 a3 a5 15 Rad1 b4 16 axb4 axb4 17 e5 (this merely leads to simplification) 17 ... Bxf3 18 Qxf3 bxc3 19 exf6 Bxf6 20 Qxc3 Bxd4+ 21 Qxd4 Ra6 22 Rf3 Qa8 23 b4 Rc6 24 Ra1?! (24 c3 d5 25 f5 Rc4 26 Qd2 would have maintained a roughly equal heavy piece middlegame: White has a passed pawn on

the queenside, but his king's shelter is weakened) 24 ... Qb8 25 c3 Rfc8 26 h4?! h5 27 Qf6 Qc7 28 Ra3 d5 29 Kh2 Rc4 30 b5? (but this is a blunder) 30 ... Rb8 31 Rf2 Rxb5 ... 0-1 (Milic-Korchnoi, Belgrade 1964).

Then 12 Bd3 appeared. Korchnoi's reaction was as risky as it was original: 12 ... a6 (12 ... Nd7! 13 Qg3 e5 with equality) 13 Kh1 b5 14 a3 Qd7?! (14 ... Nd7!) 15 Rf3 Nh5!? 16 Qe3 f5! 17 Rh3?! (17 Rf1) 17 ... Nf6 18 exf5 exf5 19 Re1 Rae8 20 Qd2 Ng4! 21 Be2 Bf6, and after 'truly dubious play' Black nevertheless obtained a reasonable position and even chances of seizing the initiative, and in the end he won on the 58th move (Matanovic-Korchnoi, Hamburg 1965).

Only 16 f5! Bf6 17 Qf2 (Korchnoi) could have disclosed the drawbacks of his set-up. In similar structures the f4-f5 breakthrough became typical. A vivid example is Karpov-Hübner (Bad Kissingen 1980).

I remember my first 'Scheveningen' lessons, given in the Baku Pioneers Palace by Oleg Privorotsky. It was these games that he showed me: at that time everyone was brought up on the games of the strongest Soviet players of the 1950s and 1960s. Oleg Isaakovich taught us: 'As Korchnoi has shown, after 9 ... Bd7 10 Qe1 Nxd4 11 Bxd4 Bc6 Black has nothing to fear, so therefore White should play 10 Nb3!' However, other ways of deviating also occurred, and one of them was demonstrated by Suetin.

Game 17

A.Suetin-V.Korchnoi

Leningrad 1967, 12th round

Sicilian Defence B83

1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 e6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Nc6 5 Nc3 d6

This, in Korchnoi's opinion, is the 'most accurate move order for Black, if he is intending to play the "Scheveningen": in this way he avoids both the Keres Attack 6 g4, and the Rauzer Variation 6 Bg5.'

6 Be3 Nf6 7 Be2 Be7 8 f4 0-0 9 Qd2!? (White avoids 9 0-0 Bd7 – see above) **9 ... Nxd4**

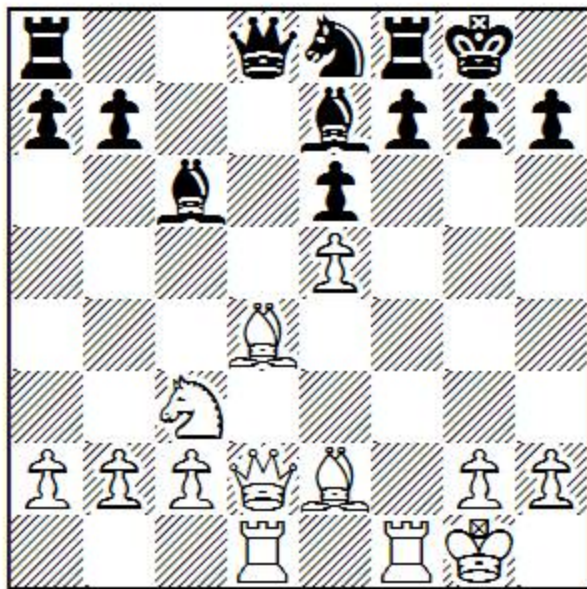
Now if 9 ... Bd7 there is the unpleasant 10 Ndb5, although the natural defender was also prepared to defend this cramped position: 10 ... d5 11 e5 Ne8 12 0-0 g6 13 Nd4 Ng7 etc. (Liberzon-Korchnoi, 38th USSR Championship, Riga 1970).

The game Sakharov-Krogius (32nd USSR Championship, Kiev 1964/65), where the plan with 9 Qd2 originated, went 9 ... a6 10 0-0-0 Qc7 11 g4! with the initiative for White, which in principle was confirmed by subsequent practice. Towards the end of the century 10 ... Nd7 11 g4 Nxd4 became popular. And yet the best method of equalising is considered to be the immediate counter in the centre 9 ... e5! (Kupreichik-Kasparov, Kislovodsk 1982).

10 Bxd4 Bd7 11 e5 (otherwise 11 ... Bc6, and the knight is not forced to retreat to e8) 11 ... dxe5 12 fxe5 Ne8 13 0-0

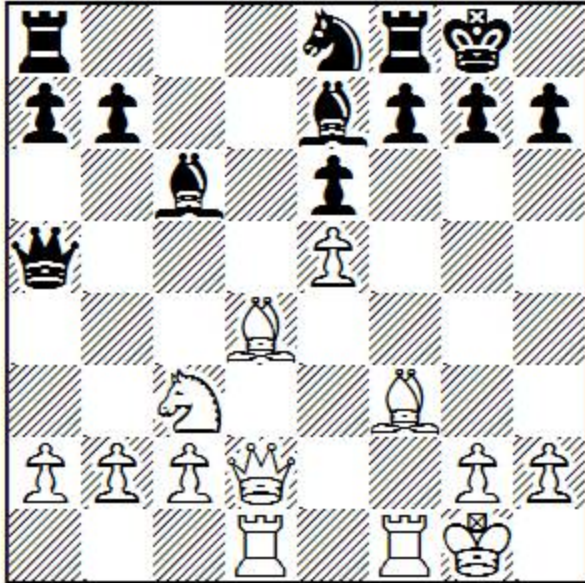
'A quieter continuation than the double-edged 13 0-0-0. The absence of direct pressure on the e5-pawn gives White the advantage.' (Osnos, Kondratiev). But if Black should manage to solve the problem of his 'bad' knight at e8, this advantage will evaporate.

13 ... Bc6 14 Rad1



14 ... Qa5! (instead of the cheerless 14 ... Nc7, Black creates the threat of ... Rd8xd4 and ... Bc5) 15 Bf3

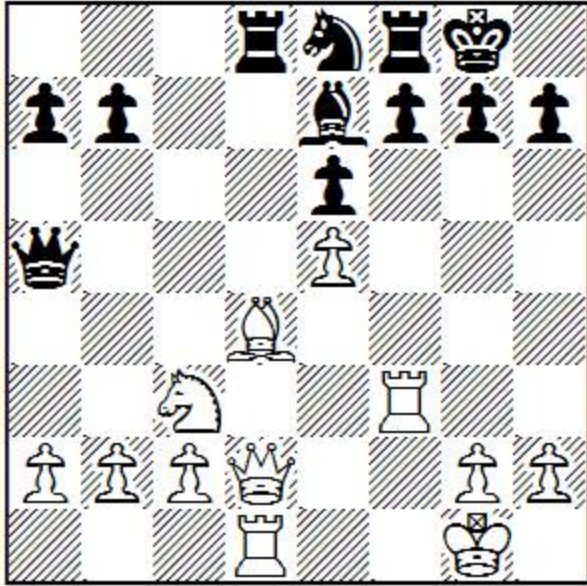
15 a3 looks attractive, with the idea of 15 ... Rd8 16 Qe3 Rxd4?! (16 ... b6 17 Kh1!) 17 Rxd4 Bc5 18 b4! Bxd4 19 Qxd4 Qxa3 20 b5 Bd5 (20 ... Bd7 21 Ne4 and Ra1) 21 Nxd5 exd5 22 Ra1 Qe7 23 Rxa7 etc. However, here 15 ... Nc7! is correct, and after 16 b4 (16 Qe3 Nd5) 16 ... Qxa3 17 b5 Black is saved by 17 ... Rad8! 18 Nb1 Rxd4 19 Qxd4 Qa5 20 c4 a6!



15 ... Bxf3

‘A significant inaccuracy. By 15 ... Rd8 (with the threat of ... Rxd4 and ... Bc5) Black could have won an important tempo for regrouping.’ (Osnos, Kondratiev). For example: 16 Qe3 Bxf3 17 Rxf3 Nc7, rapidly equalising. But Korchnoi is eager for more!

16 Rxf3 Rd8



17 Kh1 (17 Qf2!?) 17 ... Nc7

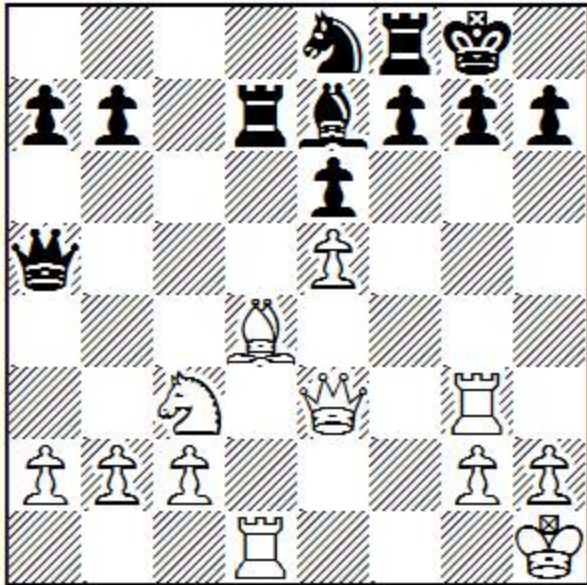
'Now if 17 ... Bc5, then 18 Rd3 is possible.' (Osnos, Kondratiev). And after 18 ... Bxd4 19 Rxd4 Rxd4 20 Qxd4 Nc7 21 a4 White has some advantage and, most important – an easy game.

18 Rg3 Rd7!?

It appears that Black is taking a deliberate risk, provoking the enemy fire. 18 ... f6 19 exf6 (19 Qh6 Rf7) 19 ... Bxf6 20 Rd3 Bxd4 21 Rxd4 Rxd4 22 Qxd4 Qf5 would have equalised, but White could have forced a draw by 20 Bxf6 Rxd2 21 Rxg7+ Kh8 22 Rf7+ Kg8 23 Rg7+.

19 Qh6 Ne8 (alas ...) 20 Qe3

The e5-pawn and the bishop at d4 paralyse Black's position, and if the white knight should move from c3 to e4 and the pawn from c2 to c3, he will be left totally without counterplay.



20 ... h5!

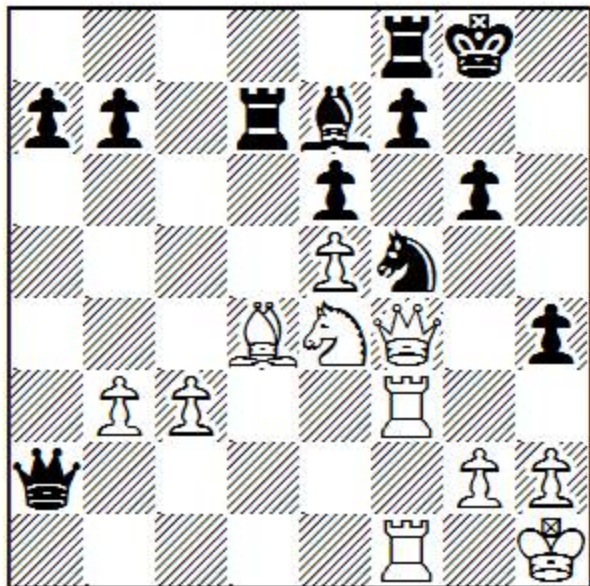
‘As always, Korchnoi confronts his opponents with the greatest obstacles.’ (Osnos, Kondratiev). An uncommonly paradoxical defence: at that time it was somehow not considered acceptable to make such pawn moves away from the king. But Black wants finally to bring his knight into play by ... g7-g6 and ... Ng7-f5, and White will not have the typical restricting move g2-g4.

With this same aim 20 ... g6 was not bad – 21 Rh3 h5 and ... Ng7 for example, but then White could have nailed down the pawn at h7 by 21 Qh6, although after 21 ... f6 (21 ... Ng7?! is hardly acceptable: 22 Rh3 Nh5 23 Rdd3! Rxd4 24 Rxd4 Qxe5 25 Qd2) 22 Rh3 Rf7 it is hard for him to count on any real advantage.

The further course of the game shows that Korchnoi’s choice was correct. Suetin spent a lot of time, but he was unable to create any serious threats on the kingside, weakened by the advance of the h-pawn, and Black gained sufficient counterplay. True, he always had to remember that the absence of the pawn from h7, together with the weakened f6-square, which the white knight was eagerly eyeing, was a potential source of problems, and after the slightest error these problems could become insoluble.

21 Rf1 (21 Qe2!? and Rgd3) 21 ... Qb4 22 Ne2 Qc4 23 c3 g6 24 Rgf3 Ng7 25 b3 Qa6 26 Ng3 h4 27 Ne4 Nf5 28 Qf4 Qxa2

‘Only when the knight has become established at f5, where it covers the immediate approaches to its king, does Black venture to take the a2-pawn.’ (Osnos, Kondratiev)



29 Bc5

‘A tempting move, but it does not promise White more than a draw. 29 g4 hxg3 30 hxg3 Kg7 31 g4 Rh8+ (31 ... Nxd4 32 Rh3! – G.K.) 32 Kg1 Rh4 would have led to complicated and unclear play.’ (Osnos, Kondratiev). But this is refuted by the simple 33 Bf2. And if 32 ... Rxd4 33 cxd4 Rh4, then 34 gxf5! Rxf4 35 f6+ Bxf6 36 exf6+ Kg8 37 Rxf4 Qxb3 38 Rh4!, when the threat of Rf2-h2 and Rh8 mate can hardly be parried.

However, instead of 30 ... Kg7? or, say, 30 ... Qxb3? 31 g4 Nxd4 (other moves also do not save Black) 32 Qh6! and Nf6+ with mate, Black has a good choice between 30 ... Qe2! and 30 ... Nxd4 31 cxd4 Qc2!, when in both cases White’s attack comes to a standstill.

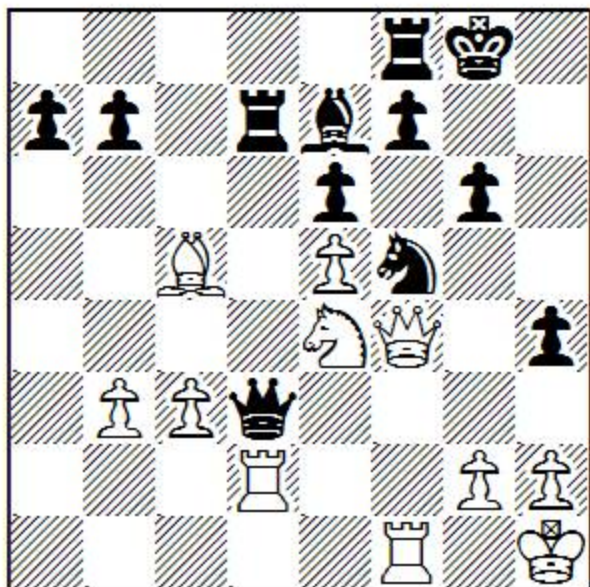
29 ... Qe2

A solid, reliable move: the queen returns to the heart of events. It would appear that Black’s defensive potential is so great that he could have parried the attack even in the event of the extremely risky 29 ... Qxb3 30 Bxe7 Rxe7 31 Rh3 Kg7, for example: 32 Rxh4 Rd7 33 Qg5 Nxh4 34 Qf6+ Kg8 35 Qxh4 Kg7, or 32 g4! hxg3 33 hxg3 Rh8 (33 ... Qd5 34 g4) 34 Rxh8 Kxh8 35 g4 Kg7! 36 gxf5 exf5 with full

compensation for the piece (it is unlikely that there is anything better than 37 Nf6 Qxc3 38 Nh5+ Kg6 39 Nf6+ with perpetual check).

30 R3f2 Qd3 31 Rf3 (or 31 Bxe7 Rxe7 32 Rd2 Qe3 with equality) 31 ... Qe2 32 R3f2 Qd3 (a draw by repetition?) 33 Rd2?!

‘As often happens, the attacking side overestimates his chances.’ (Osnos, Kondratiev). I would add: in an acute time scramble!

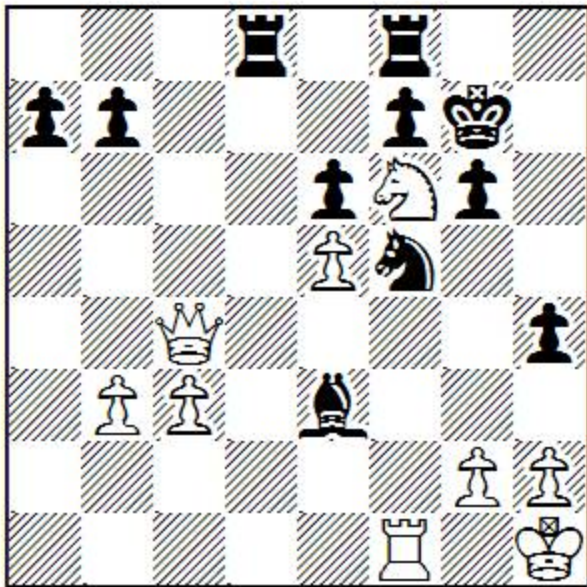


33 ... Qxd2! 34 Nxd2 Bxc5 (the rook, bishop and pawn are excellent compensation for the queen) 35 Ne4 Be3 36 Nf6+?!

‘Suddenly finding himself in the role of defender, Suetin acts extremely uncertainly. 36 Qf3 was essential, with the threat of Nf6+, and if 36 ... Kg7 37 Nd6 with good drawing chances.’ (Osnos, Kondratiev)

36 ... Kg7 37 Qc4 (37 Nxd7? Bxf4 38 Nxf8 Bxe5 39 Nd7 Bxc3 and wins) 37 ... Rdd8

With the idea of ... Rh8! The h-pawn looked to be a weakness, but it has proved to be a strength, since it prevents White from freeing his king by g2-g3. And since his king is in constant danger, it is hard for him to create any effective counterplay.



38 Ng4 Bb6 39 Nf2? (a fatal mistake with his flag about to fall, although after 39 Qe2 Rh8 with the threat of ... Ng3+ Black's position is still better: 40 Nf2 Rh5 etc.) 39 ... Bxf2 40 Rxf2 Ne3 0-1

The Interzonal tournament in Sousse (autumn 1967) was one of the most interesting chess events of those years, and not only because of the excellent start and sensational exit from the tournament of Bobby Fischer. The battle for the six qualifying places in the Candidates matches was incredibly dramatic. Korchnoi was aiming only to qualify, alternating draws with occasional wins – over Kavalek, Byrne, Larsen ... But after losing in the 15th and 17th rounds to Ivkov and Matulovic, he slipped down to 'plus two' and appeared to have lost any chance of success. However, five successive wins, including one over Portisch (who was 1½ points ahead), helped him to repair the situation: 1. Larsen – 15½ out of 21; 2-4. Geller, Gligoric and Korchnoi – 14; 5. Portisch – 13½; 6-8. Hort, Reshevsky and Stein – 13, etc.

Soon afterwards, now among the ranks of the Candidates, he gained the first, and probably the most staggering of his four victories in Wijk aan Zee (January 1968): 1. Korchnoi – 12 out of 15; 2-4. Hort, Portisch and Tal – 9; 5. Gheorghiu – 8½; 6-7. Ciric and Matanovic – 8, etc. His start – 8 out of 8, then 10½ out of 11 (4 points ahead of his nearest rivals) – could have been the envy of Fischer himself! As the Moscow weekly 64 reported, at that time a letter arrived in Belgrade

from grandmaster Trifunovic: 'Such a superiority frightens even me, an old tournament fox. Is it possible that everyone, apart from Korchnoi, has forgotten how to play chess?'

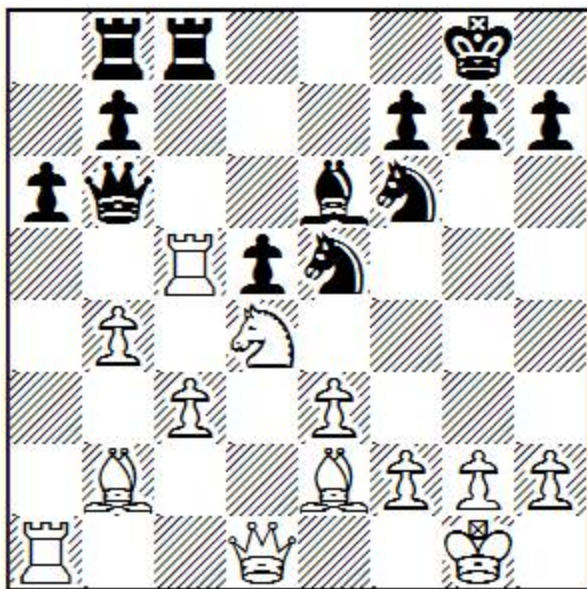
And this is what the European press wrote: 'Many times earlier we have witnessed brilliant victories by Korchnoi. It can be said with certainty: when Korchnoi plays abroad, he always finishes first ... His triumph in Wijk aan Zee is comparable with Alekhine's achievement in San Remo (1930).' Apart from anything else, this was the fruit of enormous labour: Korchnoi made 607 moves in the tournament – more than any other contestant (thus Gheorghiu made do with 345).

Few were surprised to see him gain another win over Tal. But, in my opinion, it is worth noting Korchnoi's self-critical attitude in his evaluation of the turning point of this game.

Game 18

V.Korchnoi-M.Tal

Wijk aan Zee 1968, 8th round



19 Nxe6?! fxe6?

'White made this exchange, since he did not see any way to strengthen his position. But the exchange too should not have brought him any particular benefits. After 19 ... Qxe6 White could hardly count on an advantage: his bishops have no scope,' wrote Korchnoi in 1968,

but in 1995 he firmly added: '27 years after the conclusion of the game I should be more frank: in the event of 19 ... Qxe6, in view of the terrible position of the bishop at b2, White's position is close to being lost.'

20 c4! (Tal had overlooked this) **20 ... Nxc4**

The computer prefers **20 ... Rxc5 21 Bxe5 Rcc8**, but according to Korchnoi after **22 Bxb8 Rxb8 23 Qb3** 'White has an obvious positional advantage.' The light-squared bishop against a knight – Fischer's favourite combination ...

21 Bxf6 gxf6 22 Bxc4 dxc4 23 Qg4+ Kh8 24 Qd4 (24 Qxc4!?) **24 ... Qd8 25 Qxc4 Rxc5 26 bxc5 Qd7?! (26 ... Qd5 was more tenacious – Korchnoi) 27 Qf4**, and Black resigned on the 59th move (1-0).

Also interesting is Korchnoi's comment on his game with Ciric (10th round), after **1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 Bg5 Be7 5 e3 0-0 6 Rc1!? h6 7 Bh4 b6 8 Bxf6 Bxf6 9 cxd5 exd5 10 g3**: 'I don't know whether this position had occurred earlier, but Ciric considers the move 10 g3 and the plan associated with it to be my invention. Later I several times employed the variation with 6 Rc1, which proved to be very strong against the Tartakower-Makogonov-Bondarevsky Defence. For the match in Merano (1981), instead of 7 ... b6 Karpov "with his comrades" prepared the strong move 7 ... dxc4!' (*Game No.84*).

That year Korchnoi finally made a spurt towards the summit, winning his Candidates matches against Reshevsky (5½-2½) and Tal (5½-4½). But then he lost to Spassky (3½-6½) and, having effectively become the No.3 player in the world, he gained the right to participate in the next cycle without having to qualify. All these encounters were annotated in detail by the participants themselves in a splendid book, published in Belgrade in 1969. After his defeat in the final, Viktor Lvovich admitted that his opponent had played more strongly, particularly in the middlegame, and with his customary objectivity he explained:

'For every opponent Spassky selects that weapon which is not to the player's taste. I think that when preparing for our match he outlined the type of battle needed, in order to impose the most unpleasant manner of play on me. For this it was sufficient for him to look through a dozen games of mine against players with a waiting style and to sense how uncertainly I play against them. Indeed, I did not once succeed in genuinely breaching Spassky's defence.' (cf. also the start of the chapter 'The Storming of Olympus' in Volume 3).

During the two and a half years till the next Candidates matches, Korchnoi achieved a whole series of top-class results: at the end of 1968 he won a super-tournament in Mallorca (+10=6, ahead of Spassky, Larsen and Petrosian); in 1969 he won a further three international tournaments, and in Mallorca he shared 3rd-4th places; in 1970 he distinguished himself in Rovinj/Zagreb (a share of 2nd-6th places with Fischer) and in the 38th USSR Championship in Riga, where he very confidently won his fourth gold medal (+12-1=8). And he began 1971 with another victory in Wijk aan Zee.

His present-day evaluations of his own comments on the games of that period are, as usual, sharp and self-critical. For example, on his game with Hübner (Wijk aan Zee 1971): 'These notes are more like a conversation with a journalist than a serious piece of work, but the game is interesting.' Or his win over Spassky (Palma de Mallorca 1968) – at the time after his 20th move he wrote: 'Although White's position is better, Black maintains the balance. After 20 ... d5 21 cxd5 cxd5 22 e5 there are few real chances of winning.' But now he frankly admitted: 'A weak commentary – from beginning to end. The first sentence is meaningless: what is the real state of affairs – is White better or is the position balanced?! But in the given variation, thanks to the weakness of Black's queenside pawns, White stands better.'

Korchnoi's opponent in the 1971 Candidates quarter-final match was the highly experienced Efim Geller (cf. the chapter 'Petrovich – threat to the champions' in Volume 2). In the first game he employed his favourite King's Indian Defence, but against Korchnoi this was not the best choice. Geller's position became increasingly difficult, he got into severe time-trouble, and on move 36 he overstepped the time limit. 'A defeat at the start is always unpleasant, since you are immediately in the position of having to catch up (this comment was made by Geller himself at the conclusion of the match). Perhaps this factor affected Geller's play, which was laboured and with long periods of thought, in nearly all the remaining games of the match,' wrote V.Osnos and G.Sosonko, the assistants of the Leningrad grandmaster.

But there was still much fight to come. In the even-numbered games Geller played only 1 e4, and Korchnoi employed only the Sicilian Defence: in the 2nd and 4th games – the Dragon Variation (not without success), and in the 6th and 8th he presented his 'Scheveningen experiences'. I should remind you that it was a match of ten games, and after his win in the 7th Korchnoi was leading 4½-2½. Thus the 8th game

was practically Geller's last chance of saving the match. The nervous tension had reached its peak.

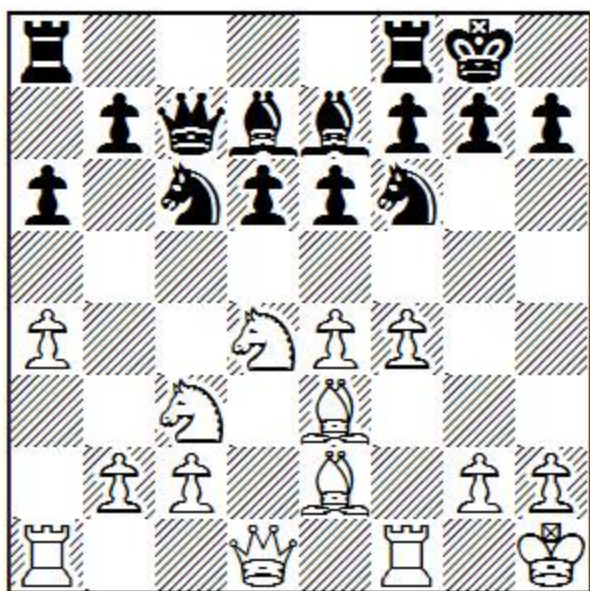
Game 19

E.Geller-V.Korchnoi

Candidates Quarter-final Match, Moscow 1971, 8th game

Sicilian Defence B85

1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Nf6 5 Nc3 a6 (not 5 ... e6 6 g4, as occurred in the 6th game) 6 Be2 e6 7 0-0 Be7 8 f4 0-0 9 Kh1 Nc6 10 Be3 Qc7 11 a4 Bd7



Korchnoi is true to his favourite manoeuvre, even with the inclusion of ... a7-a6. Nowadays everyone automatically makes the more accurate move 11 ... Re8 – I have played this many times myself, in particular in matches for the world championship with Karpov and Anand (for details, see Volume 7).

12 Nb3!

This retreat long ago became standard: otherwise there follows 'Korchnoi's relieving manoeuvre' ... Nxd4 and ... Bc6 with equality. Now, however, White has some advantage. But – and this is hard to believe – at this point Geller had already used 1 hour 35 minutes!

12 ... b6 13 Bf3

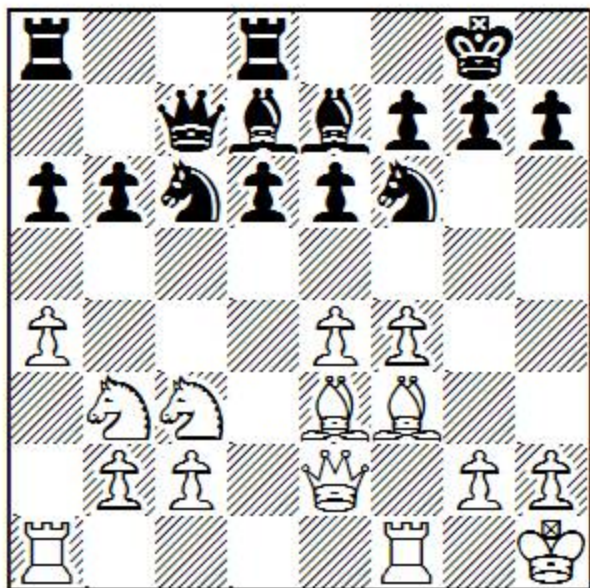
‘After the flank diversion 13 g4 Black could have replied with the central counter 13 ... d5!’ (Gufeld). Indeed, after 14 e5 Ne4 15 Nxe4 dxe4 he has a good game; if 16 c3 even 16 ... g5!? is possible.

13 ... Rfd8

An old plan with the manoeuvre of the bishop to e8, vacating the d7-square for the knight. Nowadays Black usually retreats his bishop to c8, followed by ... Bb7 and ... Nd7, but at that time this was considered unusual.

14 Qe2

White was intending the plan that was traditional at that time, involving the preparation of e4-e5 and a piece attack on the kingside. But the modern move 14 g4! is more energetic, giving White better chances of casting doubts on Black’s defensive construction: 14 ... Be8 (now after 14 ... d5 15 e5 Black does not have 15 ... Ne4, while if 15 ... Ne8, then 16 Qe2) 15 g5 Nd7 16 Bg2 etc.



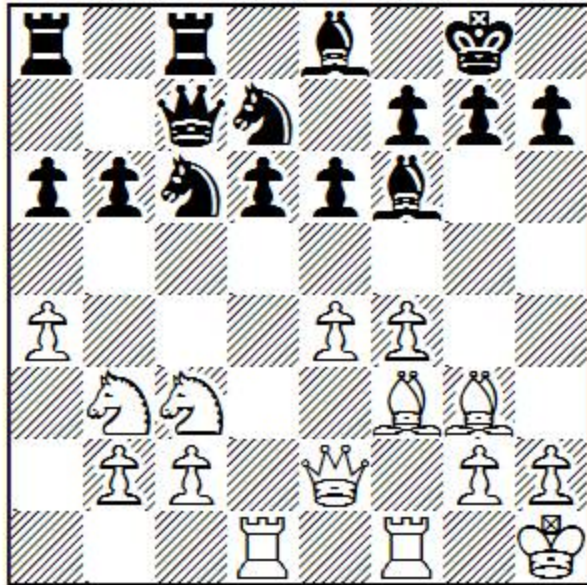
14 ... Be8 15 Bf2 Rdc8!?

Waiting strategy. ‘It took Geller a considerable amount of time to find the solution to such moves.’ (Gufeld)

16 Bg3 (16 g4!? Gufeld) **16 ... Nd7 17 Rad1** (or 17 Nd5 exd5 18 exd5 Bf6 19 dxc6 Nc5 with equality – Flohr) **17 ... Bf6**

‘This move surprised me, but if 17 ... Nc5 I was also intending 18 e5.’ (Geller). And if 18 ... d5, then 19 f5! with a powerful attack, for

example: 19 ... Nxb3 20 cxb3 Bc5 21 fxe6 fxe6 22 Nxd5! exd5 23 Bxd5+ Kh8 24 Qf3 etc.



18 e5! dxe5 19 fxe5 Be7

The e5-pawn is taboo: after 19 ... Ndx5 (19 ... Bxe5? 20 Bxc6 is worse) 20 Bxc6 Bxc6 21 Rfe1! Qb7 22 Bxe5 Bxe5 23 Qxe5 Bxg2+ 24 Kg1 White should convert his extra piece.

20 Nd4

It was suggested that 20 Bxc6 Qxc6 21 Nd4 would also have retained an attacking position, although here Black could have counted on equality by playing 21 ... Qb7! and ... Nc5.

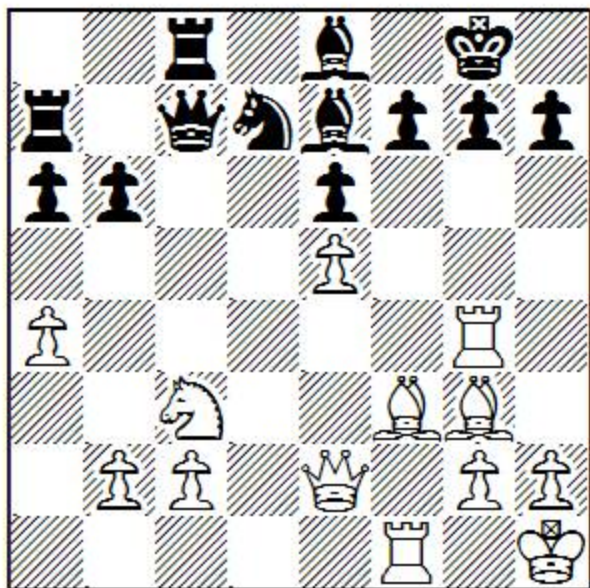
20 ... Nxd4 (20 ... Nc5 21 b4!? Gufeld) 21 Rxd4 Ra7 22 Rg4!

Heated debates flared up among the analysts regarding 22 Nd5!? exd5 23 e6. In the opinion of Flohr, 'with this simple tactical stroke White could have opened the position to his advantage.'

As evidence the following lines were given: 23 ... Qc5 24 Rxd5 Qxc2 (after 24 ... Qc4 25 exd7 Rxd7 26 Qxc4 Rxc4 27 Rxd7 Bxd7 28 Bd5 or 25 ... Bxd7 26 Qxc4 Rxc4 27 Rfd1 Be8 28 R5d2 Bg5 29 Re1! Rc8 30 Rd5 Be7 31 a5 White has the better endgame) 25 exf7+ Bxf7 26 Qxe7 Bxd5 27 Bxd5+ Kh8 28 Be5 'with a decisive attack' (Gufeld), although, in my opinion, after 28 ... Nf6! 29 Qxa7 Qe2! 30 Rb1 Qxe5 31 Qxa6 Re8 32 Bf3 Qxb2! the position is a draw.

It would appear that the immediate 23 ... Qxc2 is also acceptable: 24 exf7+ Bxf7 25 Qxe7 Qc5 26 Qh4 Nf6! 27 Bf2 Rac7 etc.

Geller chose a continuation that was far more unpleasant for Black, but here another surprise awaited him.



22 ... h5!

A move that evokes memories of the game with Suetin (*Game No.17*), especially since here Black does not have the 'bad' knight at e8. 'Such a defence is typical of Korchnoi's style in general, but here it is also objectively the best possibility, although it runs counter to a well-known axiom: don't advance pawns on the part of the board where you are weaker.' (Gufeld)

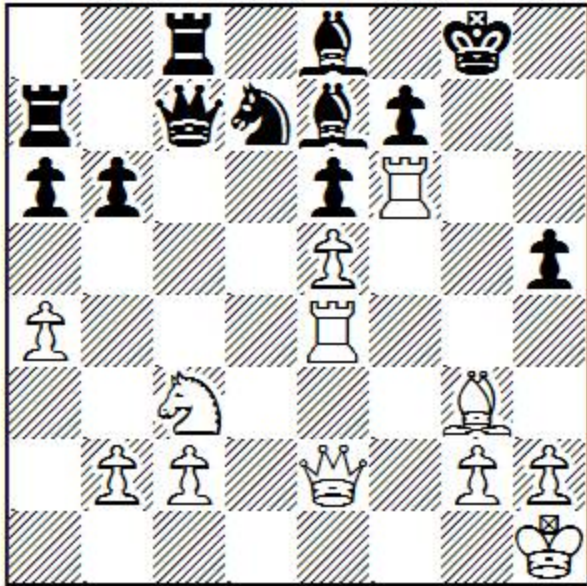
In the opinion of Flohr, a grandmaster of traditionally classical style, 'by 22 ... Nf8 Black would have achieved a perfectly sound position and after 23 h4 a complicated struggle would have developed.' However, here, in my view, the evaluation of Gufeld (Geller's second) is more accurate: 'In all variations White has a powerful initiative. He is threatening to intensify the pressure by h4-h5.'

23 Re4 g6

'After 23 ... h4 24 Bf2 Black has a difficult position.' (Gufeld). Korchnoi set his opponent a difficult psychological problem (moreover, with him short of time): now White's attack must definitely be accompanied by sacrifices. And Geller sank into agonising thought ...

24 h3

The commentators unanimously condemned this move and attached a question mark to it. 'It is surprising that such a splendid tactician as Geller marks time and in the end loses the battle, missing the excellent opportunity 24 Bxh5!? gxh5 25 Rf6!, when it would be hard even for the great Korchnoi to find a defence.' (Flohr). It is hard, but possible!



Analysis diagram

Of course, it is bad to play 25 ... Bxf6? 26 exf6 Nxf6 (a forced queen sacrifice: 26 ... Qc5 27 Rg4+! Kf8 28 Qd2 or 27 ... Kh8 28 Rc4!) 27 Bxc7 Nxe4 28 Bxb6 Nxc3 29 bxc3 Rd7 30 Qxh5 f6 (30 ... Rxc3 31 Qg4+ Kh7 32 Bd4) 31 Qe2! and White should be able to convert his two extra pawns, or 25 ... Qd8? 26 Qxh5 Nf8 27 Rh6! Ng6 (27 ... f5 28 Rh8+ Kg7 29 Qh6+ Kf7 30 Rh4! Gufeld) 28 Rg4 Bf6 29 exf6 Qxf6 30 Bf2! with an irresistible attack. Nevertheless, Black had a defence – and, it would appear, not just one:

1) 25 ... Qc5 (Korchnoi) 26 Rh6!? (Gufeld's move 26 Rg4+ does not give any advantage in view of 26 ... hxg4 27 Qxg4+ Kh7 28 Ne4! Nxf6! 29 Nxf6+ Bxf6 30 exf6 Qf8 or 29 exf6 Bf8! 30 Qh4+ Kg6 31 Nxc5 bxc5 with a draw) 26 ... f5! 27 exf6 Bxf6 28 Rxe6 Qf8! 29 Nd5 Qxh6 30 Ne7+ Bxe7 31 Rxh6 Bf8 32 Re6 Bf7 with sufficient compensation for the queen;

2) 25 ... Nf8! A typical defensive manoeuvre, creating an outpost at g6, supported by the f7-pawn and the bishop at e8: 26 Qxh5 Ng6 27 Rg4 (27 Rf3 Qd8 28 Be1 f5! 29 exf6 Bxf6 or 28 ... Bf8 29 Rh3 f5! is no better for White) 27 ... Bxf6 28 exf6 Qd8 29 Be5 Qd2! 30 h3 Rc5! 31 Kh2 Bc6 with advantage to Black, or 26 Rh6 Ng6 27 Qxh5 Bf8 28 Rh7 Bg7 29 Bh4 (nothing is given by 29 Rxc7+ Kxc7 30 Bh4 f5! 31 exf6+ Kg8) 29 ... Bxe5 30 Bg3 Bxc3 31 hxc3 f5!! (also a typical defence) 32 Rxc7 Rxc7 33 Nd5 (there is nothing else) 33 ... fxe4 34 Nxc7 Rxc7, and it is White who has to find a draw.

It should be mentioned that, apart from the thematic 25 Rf6!? (blockading the f7-pawn!) White also has 25 Nd5!? (after 25 Qxh5? f5! 26 Qh6 Nf8 his hopes are dashed) 25 ... exd5 with very interesting complications:

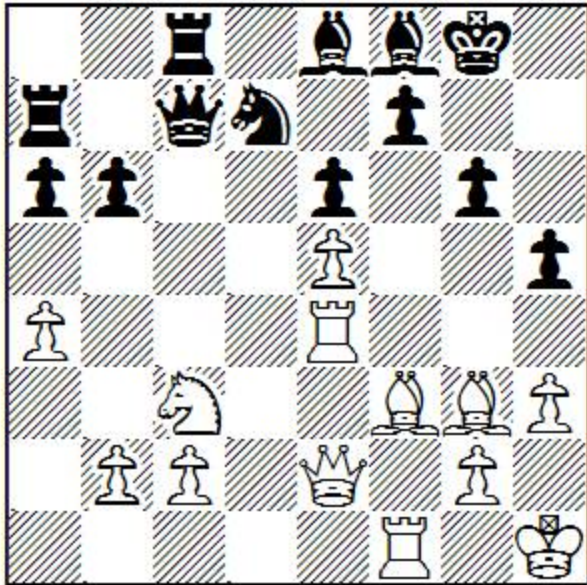
1) 26 Rg4+?! (26 e6? Qxc2 or 26 ... dxe4! 27 Bxc7 Rxc7) 26 ... hxc4 27 Qxg4+ Kf8 28 Qh5! Bg5! 29 e6 (after 29 Qxg5?! there is the pretty defence 29 ... Qc6! 30 Rf6 Qxc2 31 Qh6+ Kg8! 32 Qg5+ Qg6!) 29 ... Ne5 30 e7+ Kxe7 31 Qxg5+ Kd7 32 Bxe5 Qxc2 33 Bg3! (33 Qg4+? Kd8 34 Qg5+ Re7 35 Bd6 Qe2 and wins) 33 ... Rc6! 34 Bh4 Kc8 35 Qd8+ Kb7 36 Qxe8 Rc7 37 Bg3 Ra8 38 Qe5 Rd7, and Black retains his exchange advantage and winning chances;

2) 26 Qxh5 dxe4! 27 Qg4+ Kf8 28 Qh5! Bg5! 29 e6 (not 29 Qxg5? Qc6 30 Rf6 Qxa4 31 h3 Rc5! or 31 Qh6+ Ke7 32 Qh4 Kd8 33 b3 Qb4! 34 Rxf7+ Kc7 35 e6+ Kc6 and wins) 29 ... Ne5 30 e7+! Kg8! 31 Qxg5+ Ng6 32 Bxc7 Rxc7 33 a5! (33 h4 Rc5!) 33 ... bxa5! (now 33 ... Rc5? runs into 34 axb6! Rxc5 35 bxa7 Bc6 36 a8Q+ Bxa8 37 e8Q+) 34 h4 Rxe7 35 h5 Re5 36 Rf5 Rxf5 37 Qxf5 Re7! 38 hxc6 e3 39 gxf7+ Bxf7, and the strong passed pawn guarantees Black a draw: 40 Qxa5 (40 Qg4+ Kf8 41 Qe2 Bc4!) 40 ... e2 41 Qe1 Bg6 42 c4(3) Bd3.

Thus, after 24 Bxh5 gxh5 there appears to be no decisive continuation of the attack for White, but for several more moves the threat of the bishop sacrifice is in the air. To take such a risk, considerable courage is demanded of the player with Black – I would say, the courage of a tightrope walker, when one false step can lead to disaster. But Korchnoi keenly sensed that his opponent was in such a nervous state, that he would find it especially difficult to take committing decisions involving material sacrifices.

24 ... Bf8

Another interesting moment. Geller again had much to think about.



25 Bh2

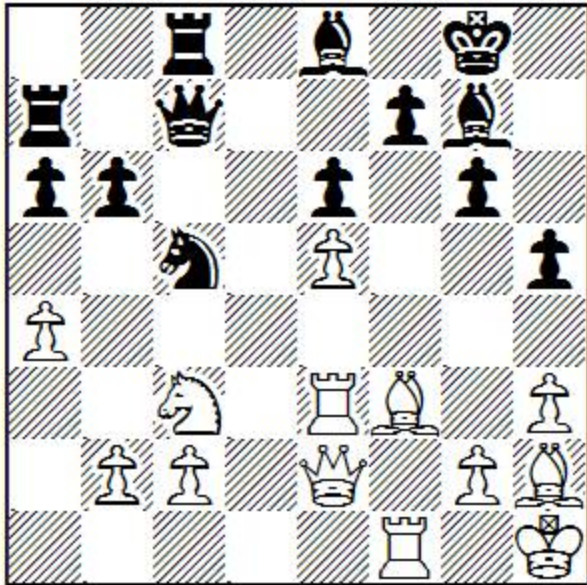
For some reason no one mentioned 25 Bxh5!? gxh5 26 Bh4! with the threat of Bf6 (and if 26 ... Nc5?, then 27 Rg4+!!), although this would have set Black even more difficult problems than the sacrifice on the previous move. After 26 ... f5 27 exf6 Bf7 28 Rf3 White's attack looks very dangerous. Let us also examine moves with the queen:

1) 26 ... Qb8 27 Bf6 Nxf6 28 Rxf6 Bg7 29 Qxh5 Rc5 30 Qg5 Kf8 31 b4! Bxf6 (31 ... Rxc3? 32 Rg4) 32 Qxf6 Rxc3, and although after 33 Rh4 Rg3 34 Rh8+ Rg8 35 Qh6+ Ke7 36 Rxc8 Ra8 or 33 Kh2! Re3! (otherwise Rh4) 34 Rxe3 Rd7 Black has a bishop for two pawns, his defence is difficult (the decisive word may be said by the passed h-pawn);

2) 26 ... Qc5! 27 Rf3! Bh6 (27 ... Bg7? 28 Rg3 with the threat of Rxc7+! and Qxh5) 28 Rg3+ Kh7 29 Bg5! Qf8 30 Rf4 Rc5 31 Ne4! (31 Qxh5 f6!) 31 ... Rxe5 32 Nf6+ Nxf6 33 Qxe5 Nd5 34 Rh4 f6 35 Qe4+ Bg6 36 Bxh6 Qxh6 37 Qxe6 and White, having regained the material, retains the initiative.

After Geller's rejection of the piece sacrifice, Black succeeds in consolidating his position, and the battle continues at a more measured pace, without straying beyond the bounds of approximate equality.

25 ... Bg7 26 Re3 Nc5

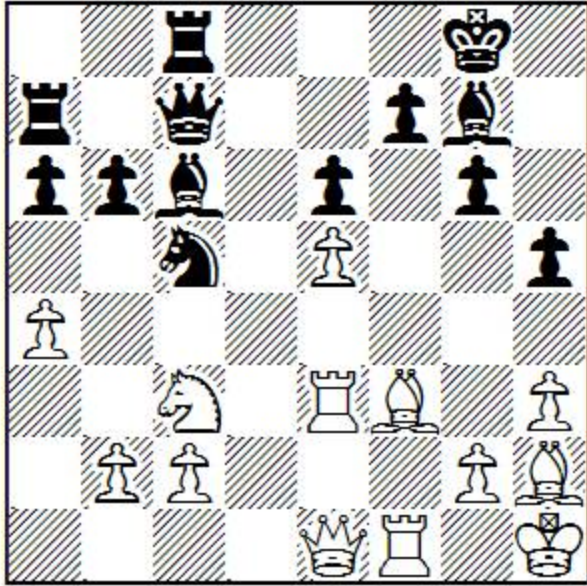


27 Qe1

‘Why does White give ground? Here too 27 Bxh5 gxh5? 28 Rf6 would have given him an irresistible attack.’ (Gufeld). However, in my opinion, the cool-headed 28 ... Nd7! 29 Qxh5 Nf8 and ... Ng6 (a familiar manoeuvre!) parries the attack, and therefore 28 Rg3! is stronger, for example: 28 ... Kf8 29 Rg5! Qc6 (29 ... Nxa4 is also insufficient – 30 Qxh5) 30 Rxc7! Kxc7 31 Qxh5 Rd7 32 Qg5+ Kf8 33 Qh6+ Kg8 34 Rf4, or 33 ... Ke7 34 Qf6+ Kf8 35 Bf4, mating.

‘True, Black can play 27 ... Nxa4, when White has merely a minimal advantage,’ adds Gufeld. But, according to the computer, here the two sides’ chances are equal.

27 ... Bc6



28 Bxc6

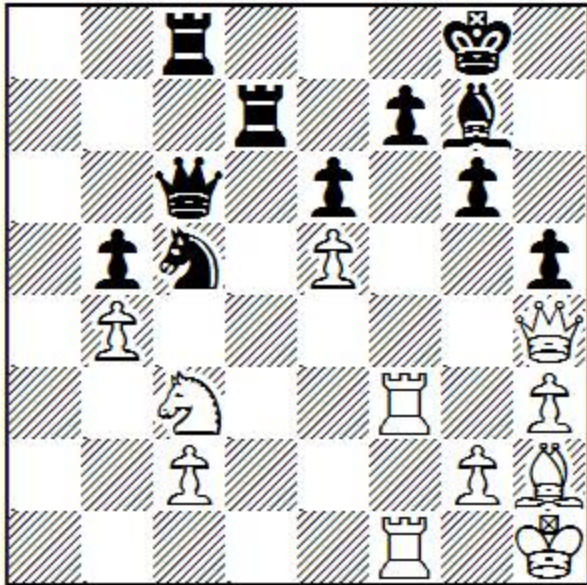
‘Either now or on the previous move Bxh5 was essential, when the picture would still have remained unclear.’ (Flohr). Alas, 28 Bxh5?! was now too late: 28 ... gxf5 29 Qh4 Qd8 (29 ... Qe7!? with the idea of ... Nd7-f8-g6) 30 Qxf5 Qd2! (30 ... Nxa4!?) 31 Rg3 (31 Re2 Qh6 and wins) 31 ... Qxc2 32 a5 Ne4! 33 Rg4 (if 33 Rxf7+ Kxf7 34 Qg4+ Kf8 35 axb6, then 35 ... Qf2!!) 33 ... Nxc3 34 axb6 Rb7 35 bxc3 Qh7! 36 Qg5 Rxb6 37 Qf6 Rb7 and Black wins.

28 ... Qxc6 29 Qh4 Rd7 30 Ref3 b5!

‘Korchnoi launches a counterattack. Calm has descended on the kingside and, as often happens in the Sicilian Defence, the battle is decided on the queenside in favour of Black.’ (Flohr)

31 axb5 axb5 32 b4?!

‘A decisive positional mistake.’ (Gufeld). This is probably an exaggeration, although 32 Bg3 was indeed sounder, with a roughly equal game.



32 ... Nd3! 33 Ne4

Because of the match situation Geller needed at the least to retain some complications, and with his flag about to fall he avoids the depressing 33 Rxd3 Rxd3 34 cxd3 Qxc3 – here, with his ‘bad’ bishop and weak pawns, the limit of White’s dreams is a draw: 35 Qe4 Rc7 or 35 Qe7 Qc7! 36 Rxf7?! (36 Qd6 Bf8) 36 ... Qxe7 37 Rxe7 Rc1+ 38 Bg1 Bxe5 39 Rxe6 Bd4 40 Rxc6+ Kf7 etc.

33 ... Qxc2 34 Nf6+?

‘This is equivalent to capitulation. 34 Nd6 was essential, when Black has a choice: to give up the exchange by 34 ... Rc4 or, which is stronger, himself attack with 34 ... Ra8 followed by ... Ra2.’ (Flohr)

The second suggestion is dubious in view of 35 Nxf7! Ra2 36 Qg5 Nxb4?! 37 Bg1! But 34 ... Rc4! (34 ... Nxe5 35 Bxe5 Bxe5 36 Nxc8 Qxc8 is equal) 35 Nxc4 Qxc4 36 Qxc4 (36 Qg5 Qxb4 37 Qe3 Qc5!) 36 ... bxc4 37 Ra1 (not 37 b5? c3) 37 ... Nxb4 (37 ... Nxe5 38 Rc3!) 38 Rc3 Nd3 39 Rxc4 Nxe5 would have left Black with a symbolic advantage.

34 ... Bxf6 35 exf6 Rd5 (easily parrying the only threat of Qg5-h6) **36 Re3 Qc4** (36 ... Qd2!) **37 Qg3?**

The last grimace of time-trouble. However, after 37 Re4 both 37 ... Nf2+ 38 Rxf2 Rd1+ 39 Bg1 Qc1 (Flohr) and 37 ... Qc3! 38 Bg3 Rc4 or 38 Qg3 Rf5 39 Rxf5 exf5 40 Re2 f4 would have been decisive.

37 ... h4 0-1

Here Geller overstepped the time limit (for the third time in the match!) and Korchnoi won 5½-2½.

The semi-final match with Petrosian was uncommonly tough, viscous and unspectacular: nine draws and one win for the ex-world champion. The stakes were high, like never before: which of the Soviet stars would be able to oppose the irrepressible Fischer in the final? Petrosian was unable. However, at that time it is also unlikely that Korchnoi would have been able to stop the American ...

In a satirical New Year story 'Match of the eras', published in 64, great players from the past met our contemporaries, and each of them chose an opponent with a similar style. Korchnoi happened to be paired with ... Emanuel Lasker! Well, such a comparison is quite appropriate. After all, Korchnoi himself once wrote: 'In his time Lasker remarked that with equal forces on the board the game is rarely interesting and usually ends in a draw. A player who does not like draws (and I am one of them) must somehow disturb the balance. Either he sacrifices something and thanks to this seizes the initiative, or he allows the opponent to attack, as compensation creating some weaknesses in his position, which he subsequently hopes to exploit. I like to entice my opponent in this way.' This very much resembles Lasker's manner of play.

This continuity is also indicated by small details, such as Korchnoi's comment on his game with Giorgadze (Batumi 1999), where after 1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 his opponent replied 3 ... Bb4: 'I don't rate this move too highly. The old rule "develop your knights first!", told to us by Emanuel Lasker more than 100 years ago, has still not lost its validity.'

Before and after the Escape

It was precisely at that time that Korchnoi's rivalry began with the young, rapidly progressing Anatoly Karpov. They had met back in 1969, when Karpov moved to Leningrad and his regular trainer became grandmaster Semion Furman, who had worked for many years with Korchnoi. The first serious game between them, in the 1970 USSR Championship, ended in the defeat of the debutant, who, however, drew a useful lesson from this: 'After analysing the course of the game, I realised this: before games with Korchnoi I should not rely on Furman's opening advice. During the years of their collaboration, Korchnoi had studied Furman and he would guess almost faultlessly

not only the opening, but also the line which the game would follow. How many times did I notice this! But he was no longer able to catch me unawares, because, after listening to my trainer, I would go my own way.'

But in 1971, shortly before his Candidates battle with Geller, Viktor Lvovich played a training match with Karpov (for Korchnoi this was a well-tryed way of preparing: in 1970 his sparring-partner was Bronstein, in 1973 – Hübner, and in 1976 – Timman). In five of the six games Karpov had White and in one he had Black. The result of this fierce domestic battle was 3-3 (+2-2=2). An excellent schooling for the 20-year-old grandmaster! However, in Karpov's opinion, 'Korchnoi also profited from the match: after making some corrections to his preparations, he crushed Geller practically without allowing any chances.'

Soon the two rivals exchanged painful blows: three rounds from the end of the Alekhine Memorial tournament (1971) Karpov won and as a result became one of the tournament winners, while Korchnoi won the decisive game in the penultimate round at Hastings (1971/72), where, scoring 11 out of 15, they shared first place.

Not only Hastings, but also the whole of 1972 turned out to be rather difficult for Korchnoi. 'There was not a single event where I played easily,' he admitted in an interview for 64. 'I was forced literally to "bend over backwards" in order to achieve my aims. My results were decent, but were inferior to those of 1969, which I consider to be my best year' (probably, also taking account of Mallorca in December 1968).

Nevertheless, for the Interzonal tournament in Leningrad (May-June 1973) Korchnoi arrived in excellent form – and he started with 8 out of 9! This included a substantial 4 out of 5 against his compatriots (because of the compulsory pairings, the Soviets contestants played against one another in the first few rounds). It was thought that his main rivals in the battle for the three Candidates places would be Larsen, Tal and Karpov.

Alas, Tal began with a draw and three defeats, and in the 6th round he also lost with White against Korchnoi after the modest 1 Nf3 Nf6 2 c4 b6 3 g3 c5 4 Bg2 Bb7 5 0-0 g6 6 b3 Bg7 7 Bb2 (later this was christened the ‘Four Bishops Opening’). But Larsen, burning with a desire to rehabilitate himself after the crushing defeat in his match with Fischer (cf. the chapter ‘Battle in Denver’ in Volume 4), did indeed immediately surge ahead and take the lead – 5½ out of 6! In the 7th round he drew, and he was caught by Korchnoi. The next day saw the gripping encounter of the two leaders, which had a great influence on the subsequent course of the tournament.

Game 20

B.Larsen-V.Korchnoi

Interzonal Tournament, Leningrad 1973, 8th round

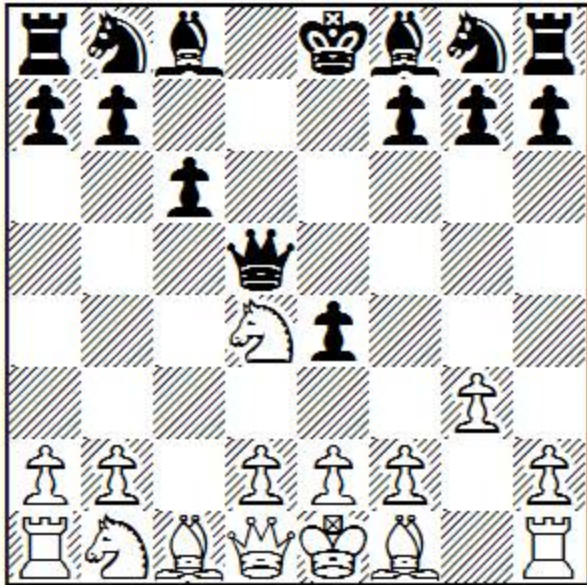
English Opening A20

1 c4 e5 2 g3 (2 Nc3 allows set-ups with ... Bb4, but now Black can undertake activity in the centre) 2 ... c6 3 Nf3

More is promised by 3 d4 (Korchnoi himself played this in a match with Bacrot ... in 1997!), but Larsen plays the opening in his favourite manner, provoking ... e5-e4. Previously he had felt very comfortable in such non-standard set-ups.

3 ... e4 4 Nd4 d5 5 cxd5 Qxd5!?

‘Paul Keres used to prefer 5 ... cxd5 or 5 ... Nf6 6 Nc3 Qb6 7 Nb3 cxd5. I twice failed to gain an advantage with White against Keres. Even so, in my home analysis I devoted more time to 5 ... Qxd5.’ (Korchnoi)



6 Nb3

Or 6 Nc2 Nf6 7 Bg2 Qh5 8 h3 Qg6 9 Nc3 Bd6 with equality (Shamkovich-Bronstein, Moscow 1970). Comparing the resulting position with the well-known variation 1 e4 c5 2 c3 Nf6 3 e5 Nd5 4 d4 cxd4 5 Qxd4, where 5 ... e6 is considered best, Korchnoi declares 6 e3 to be more promising. But, apparently, this move too did not bother him: 6 ... Nf6 7 Nc3 Qe5 8 Bg2 Bc5 9 Nb3 Bb6 10 f3 (10 d4 exd3) 10 ... exf3 11 Qxf3 Qf5 with equality (Hübner-Korchnoi, 7th matchgame, Solingen 1973).

6 ... Nf6 (subsequently 6 ... Bf5!? 7 Bg2 Qd7 was also tried, with equality) 7 Bg2

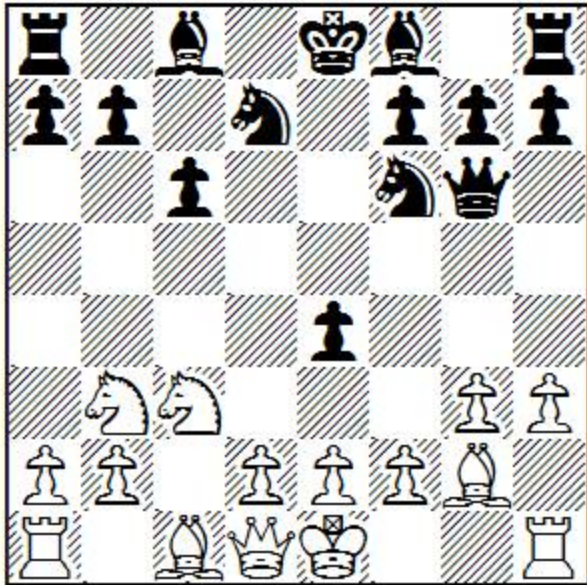
In the event of 7 Nc3 Qh5 8 d3?! exd3 9 Qxd3 Na6! Black has an excellent game (Larsen-Gulko, Hastings 1988/89).

7 ... Qh5 (with the idea of 8 Nc3 Bh3!) 8 h3

Korchnoi parries Igor Zaitsev's recommendation 8 Qc2 both by the sharp 8 ... Bh3 9 Bxe4 Nxe4 10 Qxe4+ Be7 11 Nc3 Nd7 with compensation for the pawn, and by the quiet 8 ... Bf5 9 Nd4 Bg6 10 Qb3 b6 with equality.

8 ... Qg6 9 Nc3 Nbd7

As it later transpired, this is not the most accurate move. 9 ... Na6! was better, leaving open the diagonal of the bishop at c8 and threatening a possible ... Nb4.



10 Qc2!

'This move leads to a position with some advantage for White. I was more afraid of 10 0-0 Bd6 11 d3 exd3 12 e4,' writes Korchnoi. At the board he calculated the variation 12 ... Ne5! 13 f4 Qxg3 14 fxe5 Bxe5?! and did not see the reply 14 ... Bxh3! 15 Qf3 Qxg2+ 16 Qxg2 Bxg2, which would have placed White on the verge of defeat: 17 Rxf6 gxf6 18 exd6 Rg8 19 Kf2 h5! or 17 Kxg2 Bxe5 18 Rf5?! (18 Bg5 is more tenacious) 18 ... Ng4! etc.

I should mention that 13 Kh2? (instead of 13 f4?) is also bad: 13 ... h5! 14 f4 h4 15 g4 Bxg4! with a powerful attack for Black. It would appear that here White must play 13 Bf4 0-0 14 Bxe5 Bxe5 15 Qxd3, thinking only about equality.

10 ... e3 11 Qxg6 exf2+! (after 11 ... exd2+?! 12 Bxd2 hxg6 Black's task is more difficult) 12 Kxf2 hxg6 13 d4

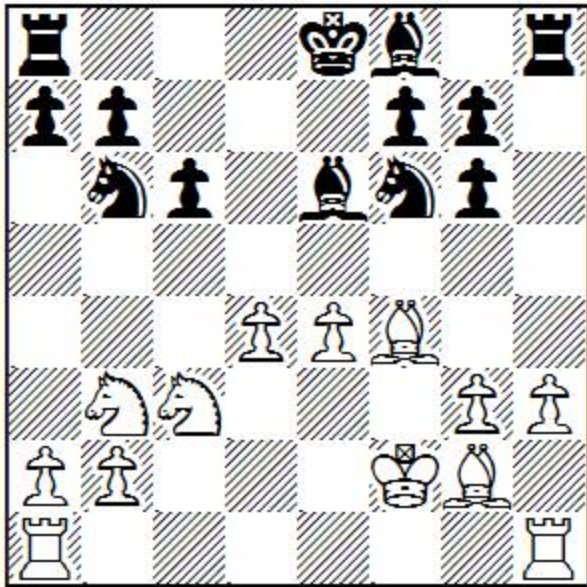
'White engages in an open battle. The pawn centre that he now erects is a strength of his position, but it also demands constant defence. The modest 13 d3 came into consideration.' (Korchnoi)

13 ... Nb6 14 e4 Be6

Korchnoi was obviously hoping that he would be able to put pressure on the e4- and d4-pawns – after all, he had often succeeded with such counterattacks in the Grünfeld Defence. Here too, in the end, this plan justified itself, although not without Larsen's assistance.

15 Bf4

Subsequently 15 Nc5 0-0-0?! 16 Nxe6 fxe6 occurred in the game Smagin-Naumkin (Moscow 1984), and here 17 e5! with the idea of Be4 would have given White an appreciable advantage. Therefore 15 ... Bxc5 16 dxc5 Nc4 was correct, and since the white bishop has not yet come out to f4, the black knight acquires an excellent post at e5.



15 ... Bb4

Retaining the option of kingside castling. 15 ... 0-0-0!? would have excluded 16 Nc5? in view of 16 ... Rxd4, but apart from the quiet 16 Rad1 it would have allowed the sharp breakthrough 16 d5!? cxd5 17 Rac1 Kd7 18 Rcd1! Kc8 19 Nb5 Rd7 20 Nxa7+ Kd8 21 Nb5. This may not be bad for Black, but it has to be agreed that such running about with the king seems very unpleasant and risky, especially in such an important game.

16 Nc5!

This not only 'looks very strong', but it is indeed so! However, White would also have retained some initiative with 16 Rac1 (Osnos) 16 ... Nh5 (16 ... 0-0-0? 17 d5; 16 ... Bxb3?! 17 axb3 0-0-0 18 d5!) 17 Be3 Nc4 18 d5, or 16 Rad1 0-0-0 (after Korchnoi's move 16 ... Rd8 again 17 Nc5! is good) 17 g4, and if 17 ... Rhe8, then 18 d5!

16 ... 0-0-0!

The most sensible: both developing, and defending the pawn. 16 ... Rd8 17 e5! or 16 ... Bxc5 17 dxc5 Nbd7 18 Bd6 (Korchnoi) was less good.

17 Nxe6!

‘Played without hesitation. I envy people, who stride through life without a shadow of doubt about where they are going.’ (Korchnoi). Although in the given instance there was no particular choice: 17 Rad1 Rxd4! or 17 a3 Bxc5 18 dxc5 Nc4 could not have satisfied White.

17 ... fxe6

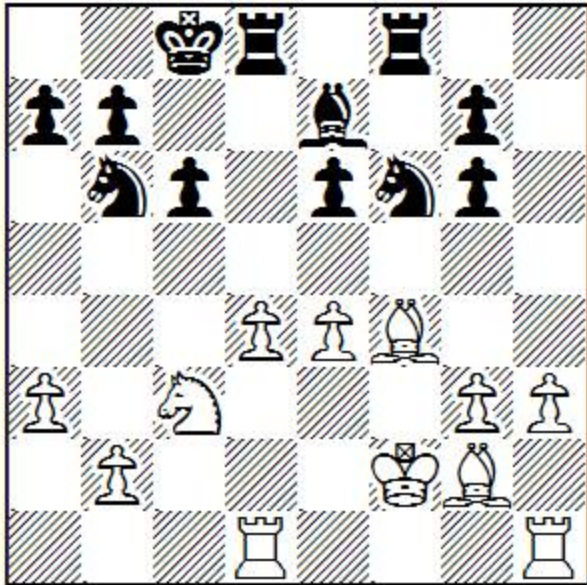
In Korchnoi’s opinion, Black now has some advantage(!): his trumps are threats along the newly-opened f-file and weaknesses in the opponent’s position (in particular, the g3-pawn). However, Black also has some obvious weaknesses – the pawns at e6, g6 and g7. White has not only the better pawn structure, but also the two bishops, and the light-squared bishop may come into play with great effect. True, because of his insecure king he has to play very carefully, and Larsen fails to cope with this problem.

18 a3?!

An error that was not noticed by anyone. 18 Ne2! was much stronger, and if 18 ... Rhf8, then 19 h4 with a clear advantage: 19 ... Nh5 20 Bh3, or 19 ... Nc4 20 b3 Nd2 21 e5 Nd5 (21 ... Nh5 22 Ke3) 22 Rac1! It is better to play 18 ... Nh5, in order after 19 Rad1 to fight for a draw by 19 ... Nxf4 (not 19 ... Rhf8 20 Bf3, or 19 ... Nc4 20 Bc1 e5 21 b3!) 20 Nxf4 Rhe8 21 h4 Rxd4!? 22 Rxd4 Bc5 23 Rhd1 e5 24 Bh3+ Kb8 25 Ne6 Bxd4+ 26 Nxd4 exd4 27 Rxd4 c5 28 Rd6 Rxe4 29 Rxc6 Re7. But here too White’s chances are better: with play on both flanks, the bishop dominates the knight (Fischer would probably have played on in this endgame down to the bare kings!).

18 ... Be7 19 Rad1 Rhf8

19 ... Nc4?! 20 Bc1 e5 is inaccurate in view of 21 d5 Rhf8 22 Ke2 Nh5 23 Rd3, and White’s position is better: Black has no possibility of developing an initiative. But now ... g6-g5 is threatened. The critical moment of the game has been reached.



20 Ke2?

An imperceptible, but serious mistake, which loses a very important tempo. 'In the event of 20 Bf3 the variation 20 ... Nc4 21 Bc1 Rxd4 or 21 ... e5 would have gained in strength.' (Korchnoi). 21 b3 Nxa3 22 d5! is more energetic, when the activity of White's bishops compensates for the loss of the pawn.

But the immediate 20 h4! was undoubtedly the most correct, for example: 20 ... Nh5 21 Bh3 Nxf4 22 gxf4 Rxf4+ 23 Kg3! (defending the h4-pawn) 23 ... Rdf8 24 Bxe6+ Kc7 25 Rd3, and the position is one of dynamic balance.

20 ... Nc4!

A powerful *zwischenzug*, setting White great problems. Perhaps Larsen had been expecting 20 ... Nh5 21 Bf3! Nxf4+ 22 gxf4 Rxf4 23 Bg4 with a roughly equal game: 23 ... Kd7 24 d5 Rdf8 25 Kd3 etc.

21 h4?!

'An excellent counterattacking resource! This move, intending Bh3 with an attack on the black king, was not one that I had expected.' (Korchnoi). But that which was the strongest just a move ago now causes White nothing but problems. However, he had a difficult choice: 21 Bc1?! Nh5 22 Rd3 c5! (Zaitsev) 23 dxc5 (23 d5? Ne5) 23 ... Bxc5, or 23 b3 cxd4 24 bxc4 dxc3, attacking on the dark squares. One also

does not want to give up a pawn by 21 b3 Nxa3, but objectively this was the best chance.

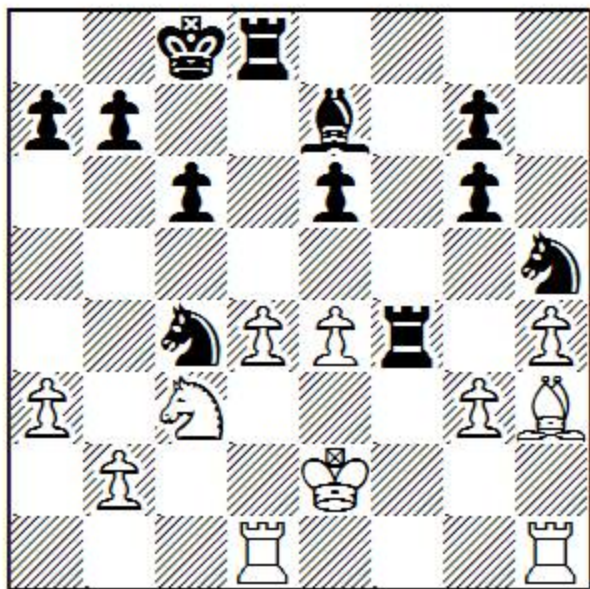
21 ... Nh5!

Pretty and unexpected. Black begins a counterattack, in the first instance getting rid of the dangerous bishop at f4. 21 ... Nxb2!? suggests itself. Korchnoi did not like 22 Rb1 Bxa3 23 Bh3 Rxd4 (23 ... Rfe8 24 d5) 24 Bxe6+ Nd7 (? – G.K.) 25 Be5 c5 (? – G.K.) 26 Bxd4 cxd4 27 Nb5 and wins, but Black could have defended by 25 ... Rf2+! 26 Kxf2 Nd3+ 27 Ke3 N3xe5 and, moreover, a move earlier he could have retained a clear advantage – 24 ... Kd8! 25 Be5 Rb4 26 Bd6 Re8! etc.

Korchnoi's choice testifies to the evolution of his style: whereas earlier he preferred to 'suffer' for a pawn, now he did not miss an opportunity to seize the initiative, and with the help of an exchange sacrifice.

22 Bh3 Rxf4!

A brilliant reply!



23 Bxe6+?

The abrupt change of scene unsettles Larsen. 'This move was made from a feeling of contradiction, which is well developed in many grandmasters. It is, so to speak: "I will not allow you, my dear

opponent, to lead me along the path of your variation – I have my own path!” ’ (Korchnoi)

Of course, it was essential to play 23 gxf4 Nxf4+ 24 Kf3 Nxb3! (24 ... Rf8 25 Kg3! is weaker) 25 Rxh3 Nxb2. This, the best way for Black, was found by Korchnoi only many years later! There can follow:

1) 26 Rd2? Nc4 27 Rd1 Bxa3! (Korchnoi's recommendation 27 ... e5 is unclear on account of 28 d5!, but not 28 dxe5?! Bxa3) with the decisive threat of ... Bb2, while if 28 Ne2, then 28 ... e5! is now winning;

2) 26 Rg1! e5! (Korchnoi suggests 26 ... Rxd4 27 Rxd4 Bf6 28 e5?! Bxe5 29 Ne4 Rd3+ 30 Kg4 Rxh3 31 Kxh3 Nd3 32 Rg5 b6 and wins, but 28 Ne2! and h4-h5-h6 is stronger, for example: 28 ... Ra4 29 Nf4 Rxa3+ 30 Kg4 Ra4 31 h5! with counterplay), and it is hard for White to gain a draw after both 27 dxe5 Nd3 28 Ne2 (28 a4 Rf8+!) 28 ... Nxe5+ 29 Kg2 Bf6 30 Nf4 (30 Kf2 c5 31 Nf4 Rd2+!) 30 ... Rd4 31 Kh1 Rxe4 32 Nxg6 c5, and 27 d5 Nd3 28 Ra1 (28 Rxd4? Rf8+ and ... Nf4) 28 ... Rf8+ 29 Kg3 c5 30 Rhh1 (30 Ra2 c4) 30 ... Rf4 or 28 dxc6 bxc6 29 Ne2 Rf8+ 30 Kg2 (30 Kg3? Nf2) 30 ... Rf2+ 31 Kh1 Rxe2 32 Rxd3 Rxe4.

However, here extreme accuracy and resourcefulness would have been demanded of Black, whereas after the move in the game he has an enduring initiative with material equal, and White is forced to conduct an altogether unpromising defence.

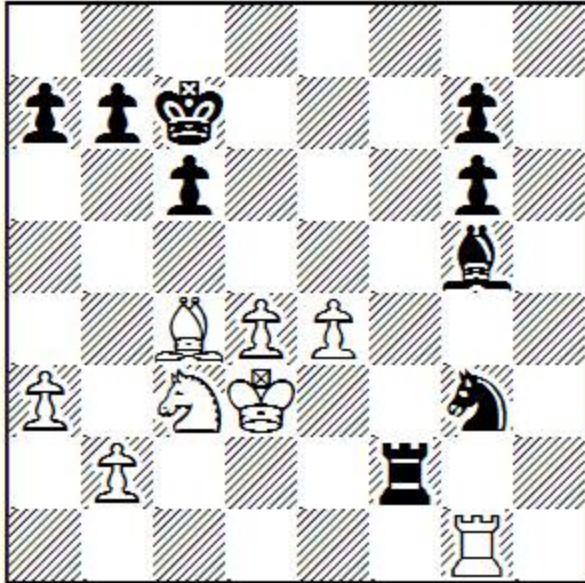
23 ... Kc7 24 Bxc4 Nxg3+ 25 Ke3 Rdf8!?

25 ... Nxb3 26 Kxf4 Nf2 27 Rd2 Bxb4 28 Kf3 Rf8+ 29 Kg2 Rf4 would have led to a technical endgame with an extra pawn for Black, but Korchnoi was playing for an attack – and I think that for Larsen this was more unpleasant! Usually opposite-coloured bishops help to save a game, but here, despite the limited material, Korchnoi succeeds in using this factor to create threats to the king.

26 Rhg1

If 26 Rh2, apart from the obvious 26 ... Bxb4, 26 ... g5!? 27 hxg5 (27 h5 g4!) 27 ... Bxg5 28 Kd3 b5 29 Be6 Rf3+ 30 Kc2 Nf1 is also strong.

26 ... Bxb4 27 Kd3 (27 Rde1? Nxe4 28 Nxe4 Bxe1 and wins; 27 Rg2 g5 etc.) 27 ... Rf2 28 Rd2 Bg5! (with minimal forces Black weaves a mating net in the middle of the board!) 29 Rxf2 Rxf2



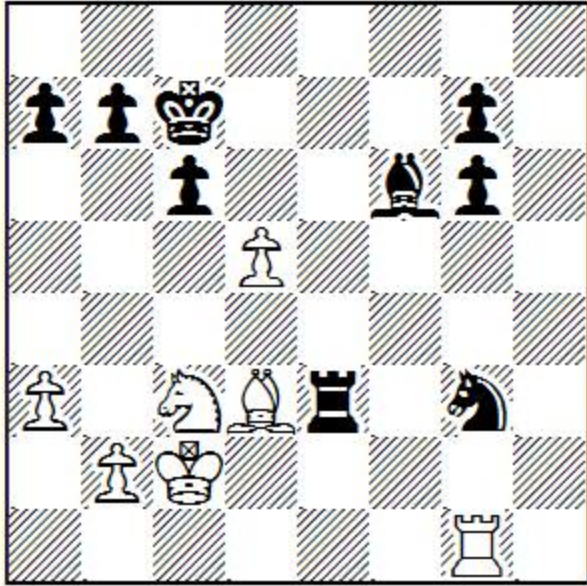
30 Ne2

There is no better defence: 30 Bf7 (after 30 Bg8(e6) Rd2+ 31 Kc4 Bf4 another pawn is lost) 30 ... Rf3+ 31 Kc2 (31 Kc4 b5+) 31 ... Be3 32 Rg2 Bxd4 33 Bxg6 Be5 and things are also hopeless for White.

30 ... Rf3+ 31 Kc2 Nxe4 32 Bd3?!

32 Rg4 was a tougher defence: 32 ... Nd6! (as Korchnoi puts it, 'Black needs to place his pieces such that they are not threatened') 33 Rxd6 (33 Bd3 Bf6) 33 ... Nxc4 34 Rxd6 Rf7, and a lengthy conversion process still lies ahead.

32 ... Re3 33 Nc3 (33 Rg4? Rxd3 and wins) 33 ... Ng3 34 d5 Bf6



35 Nd1

‘The immediate 35 dxc6 was more accurate, when 35 ... Kxc6? would have lost material after 36 Bb5+.’ (Korchnoi). But 35 ... bxc6 36 Nd1 Rf3 37 Bxg6 Ne2 would have left Black every chance of success.

35 ... Rf3 36 dxc6 Kxc6 37 Bxg6 Kd6

Despite the opponent’s desperate resistance, Black is still a pawn up with the better position. The win for him is only a matter of time and technique, something in which Korchnoi is not lacking.

38 Re1 Nf5 39 Re8 Nd4+ 40 Kd2 Bg5+

‘A weak move. The bishop was best placed at f6. But this was the 40th move, the last one before the time control.’ (Korchnoi). 40 ... Rg3! would have won more quickly.

41 Ke1 Bh4+ 42 Kd2 Rg3 43 Be4? (a blunder, although also after 43 Bd3 Bg5+ 44 Kc3 Bf6 45 Kd2 Rg2+ 46 Ke3 Rg1 47 Kd2 Nf3+ 48 Ke3 Rxd1 49 Be2 Rb1 50 Bxf3 Rxb2 the two extra pawns would have ensure Black a win) **43 ... Bg5+ 0-1**

White resigned: 44 Ke1 Rg1+.

Essentially it was this game that dashed Larsen’s hopes of again reaching the Candidates: the painful defeat had a depressing effect on him. In the second half of the tournament he was quite unrecognisable and, after suffering a further four defeats, he dropped out of contention for the prize places.

As for Korchnoi, in the 9th round he defeated another dangerous rival – Robert Byrne (who had $6\frac{1}{2}$ out of 8 at that point) and continued his confident progress. Incidentally, in the game with Byrne he employed the same rare plan against the King's Indian Defence that Taimanov had played in his match with Fischer, but with far greater success (cf. *Game No.39*, note to White's 9th move). Korchnoi annotated this game in such detail that 22 years later he merely added: 'Good comments. I would advise every young master to work on his won (and also lost!) games as much as I had to work here.'

But in the 13th round he unexpectedly lost to Rukavina and was caught by Karpov, who played the entire tournament very evenly and strongly. They also finished level, after each scoring a further $3\frac{1}{2}$ out of 4(!), and in total – $13\frac{1}{2}$ out of 17, a point ahead of Byrne, who undoubtedly played the 'tournament of his life'. However, Korchnoi too rates this Interzonal, like the tournaments in Wijk aan Zee and Mallorca (1968) among the best achievements in his career.

The favourites in the 1974 Candidates series were considered to be the ex-world champions Spassky and Petrosian. However, Korchnoi and Karpov overturned all the forecasts: the former defeated Mecking (+3–1=9) and Petrosian (+3–1=1), who resigned ahead of schedule, and the latter – Polugayevsky and Spassky. Details of these two encounters and the Karpov-Korchnoi final Candidates match will be found in the chapter on the 12th world champion.

It was then that the persecution of Korchnoi, which in the end led to him escaping from the USSR, began. I should remind you that the Candidates final would determine the opponent of the American Fischer, and the Soviet authorities decided to pin their hopes on Karpov. 'Our match was perceived as an important political action by all the organisations of the Soviet Union,' writes Korchnoi. 'An action which should have ensured victory for the young challenger – a Russian, a product of the working class, who was faithful and obedient to the authorities. He was given all the best resources, and was also provided with support outside of chess ... When the match ended, it only remained to fulfil the second, easier part of the political objective that had been set – to punish me. To make an example of me, as a warning to others. For what? For independence in thinking and behaviour. But more concretely – for the fact that I had fought in this match, when it was already clear to everyone what *should* happen.'

The official ground for punishment was a sharp, angry interview which Korchnoi gave to B.Kazic on the conclusion of the match, which was published in the Yugoslav newspaper *Politika*. Here is this seditious and, as shown by subsequent chess history, in fact by no means objective, text (with his final conclusion Viktor Lvovich altogether 'guessed wrongly'):

'I think that Petrosian, whom I beat in the semi-final, is stronger than Karpov. And in general, neither Spassky, nor Polugayevsky, against whom Karpov won, is inferior to him in chess knowledge and talent. I think that I too can be compared with these grandmasters. I put up more of a resistance than they did ... Karpov does not possess an extensive chess arsenal or great chess "assets". But he is a player of very strong will, with a fantastic striving for victory. With this enormous will-power he literally squeezed his opponents, including me ... When I lost the match to Spassky (1968), I found it difficult. But I sensed his strength and I predicted his win over Petrosian. And Spassky did indeed become world champion. But about my last opponent I cannot say that a brilliant future awaits him.'

The response of the authorities was severe: 'for incorrect behaviour' Korchnoi was forbidden by a decree of the Sports Committee to play in any international tournaments for a year and his grandmaster stipend was reduced by one third. A campaign against him was begun in the newspaper *Sovyet'sky Sport*, where his former friend, but now bitterest enemy, Petrosian published a response 'Regarding an interview by V.Korchnoi' and then indignant letters from readers appeared under the heading 'Unsporting, grandmaster!'

The year of disgrace, 1975, was certainly the most difficult in Korchnoi's professional career. In February, 'under the guise of intensive preparation for Karpov's match with Fischer, the leading Soviet grandmasters were obliged to present in writing their evaluation of the style and strengths of Fischer's play, and at the same time, for comparison, also that of Karpov,' but Korchnoi refused (a similar letter in 1972 had been sufficient – cf. the start of the chapter 'Battle of the Gods' in Volume 4). In March his invitation to an international tournament in Tallinn was cancelled. But soon Karpov came to his help. 'He had become world champion without playing the match with Fischer, and it so happened that the public were somehow beginning to forget those he had defeated: his victims, Spassky and Korchnoi, had fallen into disgrace, and hence into obscurity,' explains Korchnoi.

‘Karpov took steps to bring me back into commission. I was allowed to play in the autumn Alekhine Memorial tournament in Moscow, and then also in Hastings (1975/76).’

It need hardly be said that in the Moscow super-tournament the most important game for Korchnoi was the one with Petrosian. I cannot avoid quoting a few of his remarkable comments, which date from the 21st century (I think that in general he is one of the best annotators in the history of chess).

Game 21

V.Korchnoi-T.Petrosian

Alekhine Memorial Tournament, Moscow 1975, 11th round

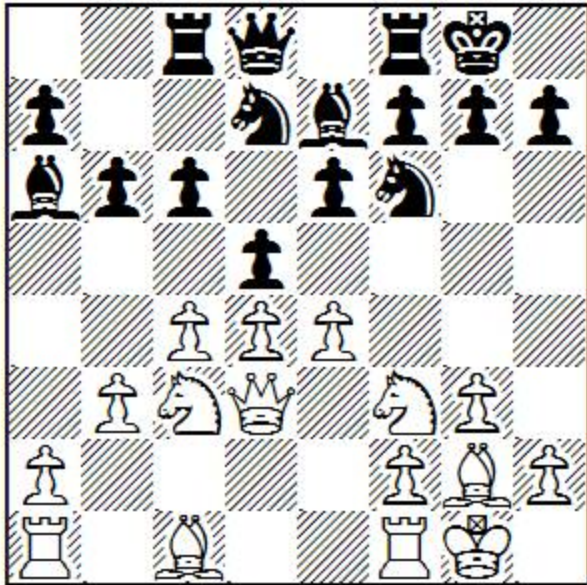
Catalan Opening E07

1 c4 Nf6 2 Nc3 e6 3 Nf3 d5 4 d4 Be7 5 g3 0-0 6 Bg2 Nbd7 7 Qd3!?

‘This rather strange move was shown to me before the game by Yakov Murey ... And although it had been employed earlier – in my database I found the game Koblents-Bogoljubow (1939) – it is Murey, of course, who deserves the credit for establishing the move 7 Qd3 (with my help) in modern grandmaster play.’

7 ... c6 8 0-0 b6 9 e4 Ba6 10 b3 Rc8

‘Petrosian always treated novelties with respect. He never tried to refute them at the board, but looked in the first instance for the safest continuation. Later it was established that Black can equalise by continuing 10 ... dxc4 11 bxc4 e5 12 dxe5 Ng4. Also, now or on the next move, ... b6-b5 came into consideration, forcing White to play cxd5. But Petrosian does not undertake anything active.’



11 Bf4 Re8?! 12 Rfd1 Nf8 13 a4 Bb4 14 e5 N6d7 15 Bd2 Nb8 16 Qc2!, and since 16 ... dxc4 17 bxc4 Bxc4? 18 Ne4 is unfavourable for Black, White seized the initiative. On the 30th move Black was forced to give up a rook for a powerful knight at d6. 'And at the same time, for Petrosian the exchange sacrifice was a recurrent strategic theme – in this way he won a number of games!'

The game was adjourned twice (Korchnoi was helped in his analysis by his compatriot and old friend Spassky) and in total was played over three evenings, with White finding himself in time-trouble three times! In the end, the tired Korchnoi found an unexpected idea at the board on the 66th move. Petrosian immediately made a mistake and on the 74th move he conceded defeat. Korchnoi's epilogue: 'A few years later Yakov Murey wrote to me: "This game was won by three of us – by me in the opening, by you in the middlegame, and by Spassky in the endgame." This is the truth. I should like to take the opportunity to express my gratitude to Boris Spassky for his excellent adjournment analysis.'

It was that autumn, in November, that I first met Karpov and Korchnoi at the chessboard – in the then popular tournament of Pioneers' Palaces. In each round the grandmaster captain played simultaneously against seven young opponents, then his result was added to the result of his team, and the winners were those who

ultimately gained the greatest number of points. Karpov played for Chelyabinsk, Korchnoi for Leningrad, Smyslov for Moscow, Bagirov for my native Baku, and so on.

The Baku team was not very strong, and I, a 12-year-old candidate master, frequently had to effectively play one to one with the grandmaster, who devoted the main attention to the game with his most dangerous opponent. In the 1st round I lost from an excellent position to Smyslov, in the 2nd I earned a point in a rook ending with Katalymov, and in the 3rd I made a draw from a position of strength with Polugayevsky. In the 4th round, playing against Karpov, I altogether finished up playing alone – and, alas, I was unable to hold my ground, although I again had an excellent position. Then came a draw with Kuzmin. And in the 6th and final round we played Korchnoi, who was engaged in a desperate struggle with Karpov and Smyslov for the best result among the grandmasters, while the Leningrad team was competing with Moscow for first place in the overall score.

The display took an exceptionally tense course: Korchnoi played with enormous drive – he was trying to finish ahead of Karpov at any price. For him this was a crucial matter – to gain at least a minor revenge! I played the King's Indian Defence and, on encountering the Sämisch Variation, I sacrificed a pawn to gain compensation in the form of a powerful dark-squared bishop against a knight. In the endgame Black seized the initiative and Korchnoi had to solve some very difficult problems. Eventually he held out, but at the cost of great effort, and the grandmaster lost an 'extra' point on the other boards. Thus it was Smyslov who finished with the best result – 38 out of 42, with Karpov and Korchnoi half a point behind. True, the points gained by Karpov carried more weight: in contrast to his rivals, he played against both of the strongest teams – Moscow and Leningrad ... The emotions of Viktor Lvovich were plain to see.

His farewell 'Soviet finale' was his victory on board one in the USSR Team Cup (Tbilisi, April 1976) – 5 out of 7, ahead of Karpov (4 out of 6), Petrosian, Tal and Smyslov. In the key match between Trud and the Central Army Club, it was the reserve Gipslis instead of Karpov who turned out to play Black against Korchnoi – and he was unable to withstand his opponent's onslaught. Something similar, you may recall, occurred at the 1939 Olympiad in Buenos Aires: Alekhine and Capablanca were also competing for the best result on board one, and

when the Cuban missed the game with his main rival, the enraged Alekhine crushed the reserve player ...

In July 1976 sensational news spread round the chess world: one of the winners of the tournament in Amsterdam, the four-times USSR Champion Viktor Korchnoi, had requested political asylum in Holland! By his own admission, the decision to leave had been taken at the end of December 1974. And later he repeatedly emphasised the purely professional motives for his action. He simply became aware of 'the need to leave for the sake of continuing, saving his chess life, which Party officials in alliance with certain grandmasters had decided to stifle.'

But, of course, the Soviet authorities judged Korchnoi's defection to be a political action and assailed him with the entire might of the propaganda machine: a statement by TASS, an extensive resolution by the Chess Federation, an open condemnatory letter by more than thirty Soviet grandmasters (not signed only by Botvinnik, Bronstein, Spassky and Gulko), and a separate condemnatory letter by Karpov ... They were unanimously revolted by 'Korchnoi's unworthy behaviour' and approved the verdict of the Federation to 'deprive him of his sports titles and the right to represent the Soviet Chess School in the world arena.'

Meanwhile, Korchnoi had represented this school for a good twenty years, and he did this more than worthily: as a member of the USSR team he was the winner of five European Team Championships (+22-3=11) and six World Olympiads (+50-3=31). The last time he played for the Soviet Union, brilliantly as usual, was at the Olympiad in Nice (1974). Of his eight wins I especially like his 'French duel' with the rising star of European chess Jan Timman.

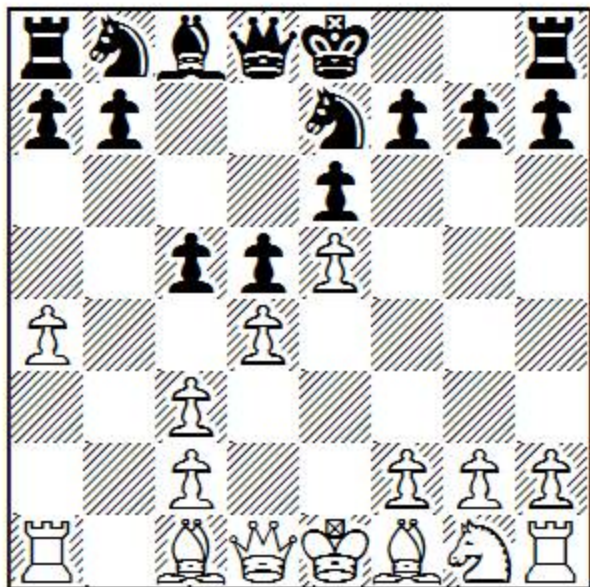
Game 22

J.Timman-V.Korchnoi

21st Olympiad, Nice 1974

French Defence C19

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 Nc3 Bb4 4 e5 c5 5 a3 Bxc3+ 6 bxc3 Ne7 7 a4 (7 Qg4 – *Game Nos.3, 14 and 27*)



7 ... Qa5!?

Either now or a move later, after 7 ... Nbc6 or 7 ... Bd7 8 Nf3, this queen move eventually 'killed' the popular idea 7 a4.

8 Qd2

In the game Fischer-Korchnoi (Herceg Novi blitz 1970) White tried to exploit the absence of the knight from f3 by 8 Bd2 Nbc6 9 Qg4 (9 Nf3 – *Game No.23*), but after 9 ... 0-0 10 Nf3 f6 11 Bd3?! f5! 12 Qg3 c4 13 Be2 b5 14 0-0 bxa4 he did not achieve anything.

8 ... Nbc6 9 Nf3 Bd7

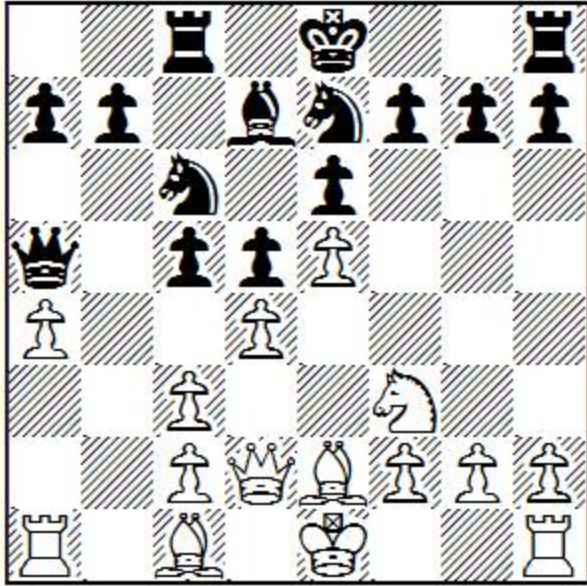
The main line – a flexible developing move, although Viktor Lvovich also tried both 9 ... 0-0 and 9 ... f6.

10 Be2

10 Bb5?! is dubious in view of 10 ... Nxe5! (Mnatsakanian-Korchnoi, Erevan 1965), while if 10 Bd3, then 10 ... f6! (Fischer-Uhlmann, Stockholm Interzonal 1962; Tringov-Korchnoi, Skopje Olympiad 1972).

10 ... Rc8

10 ... f6 11 exf6 gxf6 12 Ba3!? or 12 dxc5 (*Game No.12*) is sharper, but perhaps this would have been more in keeping with Timman's tastes ...



11 Bxd3

This does not waste a tempo: with the rook at c8, 11 ... c4 and ... f7-f6 is weaker, since Black does not have queenside castling followed by counterplay in the centre and on the kingside, while if 11 ... 0-0, then 12 Ba3 is unpleasant. Therefore Black is forced to exchange queens. With this aim White can also play the immediate 11 Ba3!? (11 dxc5 Ng6 is equal; Smyslov-Uhlmann, Mar del Plata 1966) 11 ... cxd4 12 cxd4 Qxd2+ 13 Kxd2 Na5 14 Rhb1 or 13 ... Nf5 14 c3 and Rhb1.

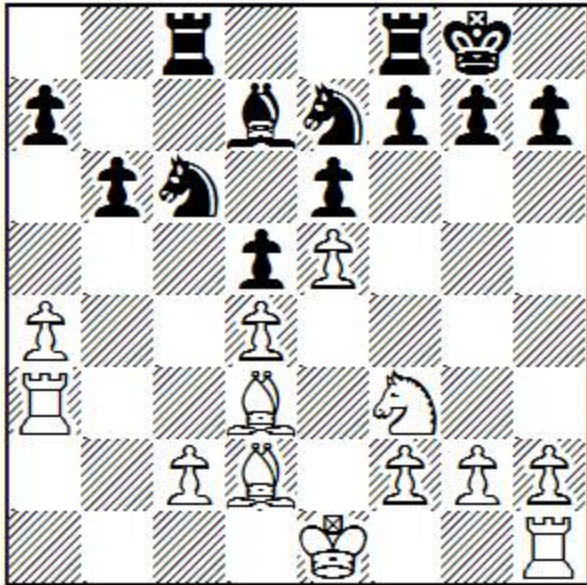
11 ... cxd4 12 cxd4 Qxd2+ 13 Bxd2 (depriving the black knight of the b4- and a5-squares) 13 ... b6!?

A novelty. Earlier Portisch and Uhlmann achieved equality after 13 ... Nf5 14 Bxf5 exf5.

14 Ra3

For the moment maintaining the tension, which would be quickly released after 14 a5 Nxa5 15 Bxa5 bxa5 16 Rxa5 Nc6 17 Ra3 Ke7 (17 ... a5!?) 18 Kd2 a5 19 Rha1 Rb8, and Black has nothing to fear.

14 ... 0-0



15 0-0 (White would like to leave his king in the centre, but in the event of 15 Ke2 f6! it is hard to maintain the pawn at e5, or, after exf6, to prepare for ... e6-e5) 15 ... Rc7

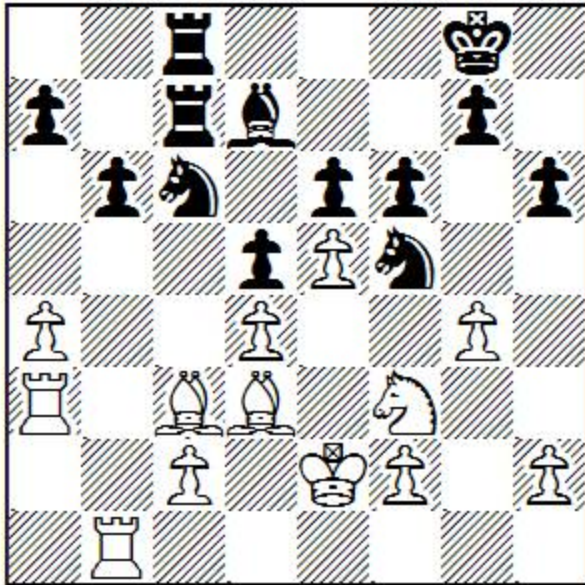
Now if 15 ... f6 there is 16 exf6 gxf6 17 Re1, and so Black does not hurry to attack the centre.

16 Rb1 h6 17 Kf1 Nf5 18 Bc3 Rfc8 19 Ke2 f6!

At just the right time. Smyslov recommended 19 ... Na5, but after 20 Bxa5 bxa5 21 c3! White would have had the chance of gradually approaching the doubled a-pawns. And it was not for the sake of such a passive position that Korchnoi played the French Defence!

20 g4

Driving away the knight before the exchange on f6, as otherwise it would be able to go to d6. With this move White effectively allows a draw, but Smyslov's recommendation of 20 exf6 (20 Ba6 Rf8!) 20 ... gxf6 21 Bxf5 exf5 22 Ne1, with the idea after 22 ... Na5?! 23 Bxa5 bxa5 24 Kd2 Rc4 25 c3 Rxa4 26 Rxa4 Bxa4 27 Ra1 Bb5 28 Rxa5 a6 29 Nd3 Re8 30 Nf4 of exploiting the weakness of the black pawns, did not promise any benefits on account of 22 ... Re8+ and ... Re4, as well as 22 ... Ne5!? 23 dxe5 Rxc3, or even 22 ... Nd8!? 23 Bd2 Ne6 24 c3 Re8 25 Kf1 Ng5 26 f3 Bc8!



20 ... Nfe7!?

A characteristic moment. 20 ... Ncxd4+ 21 Bxd4 Nxd4+ 22 Nxd4 fxe5 suggests itself, for example: 23 Nb5 (23 Nb3 e4) 23 ... Bxb5 24 Bxb5 (otherwise ... e5-e4) 24 ... Rxc2+ 25 Ke1(3) Rf8 26 Be2 e4 with good compensation for the piece, or 23 Ba6 exd4 24 Bxc8 Rxc2+ 25 Kd3 Rxc8 26 Kxd4 Rc4+ 27 Ke5 Bxa4 28 Kxe6 Rxc4 with an easy draw. But Korchnoi is thirsting only for a win and he takes a definite strategic risk!

21 exf6 gxf6 22 h4

After 22 Ba6 Re8 Black would have been threatening ... e6-e5. But the prophylactic 22 Kd2!? came into consideration (Smyslov).

22 ... Be8!?

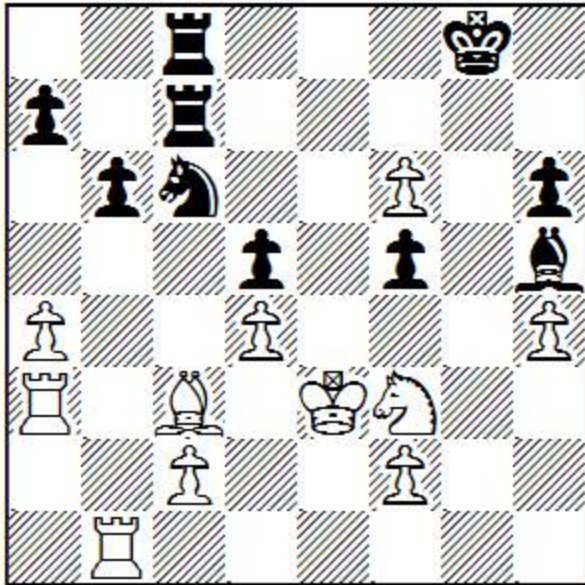
Again, as a matter of principle, rejecting the simplifying 22 ... Na5 23 Bxa5 bxa5 – although after 24 Ke3 Kf7 Black has a solid position, in this way it is not possible to confuse his young opponent.

23 g5?!

It was hardly right to release the black bishop. 23 h5?! was also unfavourable, since after 23 ... f5! Black sets his sights on the h5-pawn. But 23 Bd2 or 23 Ba6 Rd8 24 Bd2 would have allowed White to fight for a positional advantage.

23 ... Bh5 (now one can more probably talk about a dynamic balance)

24 gxf6 Nf5 25 Bxf5 exf5 26 Ke3



After ridding himself of the potential threat ... e6-e5 and of the pin on his knight, White can at last think about the a4-a5 breakthrough.

26 ... Kf7 27 Rb5?!

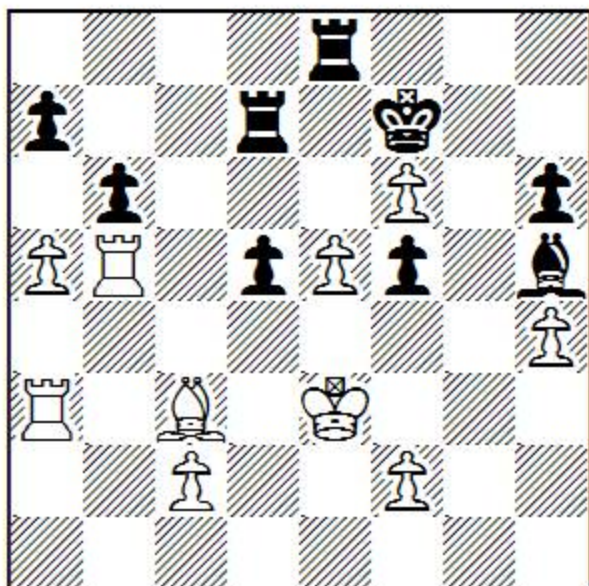
A delay, and besides, on this square the rook proves vulnerable. White should have immediately played 27 a5! bxa5 28 Bxa5, and after 28 ... Nxa5?! 29 Ne5+ Kxf6 30 Rxa5 Rxc2 31 Ra6+ or 28 ... Rd7 29 Ne5+ Nxe5 30 dxe5 Rxc2 31 Re1! Ke6 32 Bd2! he would develop a dangerous initiative. Therefore 28 ... Re8+! 29 Ne5+ Nxe5 30 dxe5 Rxe5+ 31 Kd4 Re4+ 32 Kxd5 Rd7+ 33 Kc6 Ke6 is better, when the opposite-coloured bishops ensure a draw, despite the activity of the white king.

27 ... Rd7 (a seemingly passive move, but it strengthens Black's latent threats) **28 a5**

There is nothing better: 28 Ne5+? Nxe5 29 dxe5 is parried by 29 ... Rxc3+! 30 Rxc3 d4+, whereas Smyslov's recommendation 28 Kf4 Kxf6 29 a5 is dubious in view of 29 ... Rg7! 30 axb6 Rg4+ 31 Ke3 Re4+ 32 Kd2 Bxf3 33 bxa7 Re2+ 34 Kc1 Nxa7 35 Rc5 Nc6, or 30 Ne5 Nxe5 31 dxe5+ Ke6 32 Ke3 (32 axb6? Rg4+ 33 Ke3 d4+! 34 Kd3 Re4! 35 b7 Be2+ 36 Kd2 Rb8 and wins) 32 ... Rg4 33 Kd3 (33 Kd2 d4! 34 Bb2 Rf4) 33 ... Re4 34 Rb4 b5 with an obvious advantage to Black.

28 ... Re8+ 29 Ne5+! (after 29 Kf4 Re4+ 30 Kg3 Kxf6 Korchnoi would have unexpectedly created a terribly strong attack: 31 Ne5 Rg7+ 32

Kh3 Be2 33 Rb1 bxa5!, and 34 Nxc6? is not possible on account of 34 ... Bf3 with unavoidable mate) 29 ... Nxe5 30 dxe5



30 ... d4+! 31 Bxd4 f4+! 32 Kxf4?!

Black's sudden switching to a counterattack (Korchnoi's favourite device!) throws Timman off balance. In time-trouble he begins to 'drift' and he misses a chance to create the maximum difficulties for his opponent by 32 Kd3 Bg6+ 33 Kc3 Rc8+ 34 Kb2 Rxd4 35 axb6 axb6 36 Ra7+ Kf8 37 e6!

32 ... Rxd4+ 33 Ke3 Rxh4 34 Rd3 (34 axb6? Rh3+ and ... Rxa3) 34 ... a6! 35 Rd7+?! (35 Rbd5 would have retained good chances of a draw) 35 ... Kf8 36 Rbd5?

And this is a decisive mistake. 36 Rxb6 Rxe5+ 37 Kd2 was essential, pinning his hopes on the activity of his rooks and the f6-pawn.

36 ... Bf7 (now Black must be able to convert his material advantage) 37 f4 Bxd5 38 Rxd5 bxa5 39 Rxa5 Kf7 (39 ... h5!? 40 Rxa6 Rh1) 40 Rxa6 Kg6 41 Ke4 (or 41 Rc6 Rd8 42 Ke4 Rh1) 41 ... Rc8 42 Ra7 0-1

White resigned, without waiting for 42 ... Rc4+ 43 Kd5 Rhxf4 44 Rg7+ Kf5.

As often happens in chess, this duel had an interesting continuation. Soon after his escape to the West, Korchnoi played an entire best of ten games match with Timman, which served as a good warm-up for

the 1977 Candidates cycle. The first two games ended in draws, but in the third, where Korchnoi again chose the French Defence, Timman's misadventures in the match began.

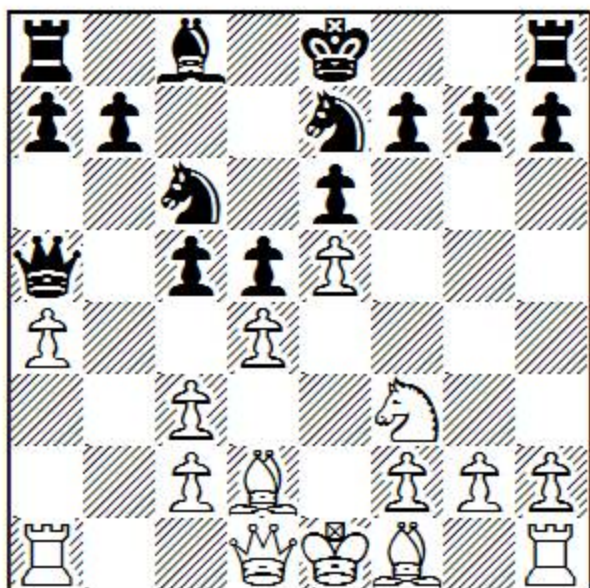
Game 23

J.Timman-V.Korchnoi

Match, Leeuwarden 1976, 3rd game

French Defence C19

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 Nc3 Bb4 4 e5 c5 5 a3 Bxc3+ 6 bxc3 Ne7 7 a4 Nbc6 8 Nf3 Qa5! (8 ... Bd7 – *Game No.12*) 9 Bd2 (on this occasion Timman avoids 9 Qd2 – *Game No.22*)



9 ... Bd7 10 Be2

Another *tabiya* of that time. After 10 Bb5?! (with the idea of 10 ... a6 11 Be2!) Korchnoi introduced both 10 ... c4 (against Cherepkov, Leningrad 1964) and 10 ... Qc7 (against R.Byrne, Nice Olympiad 1974).

10 ... f6!

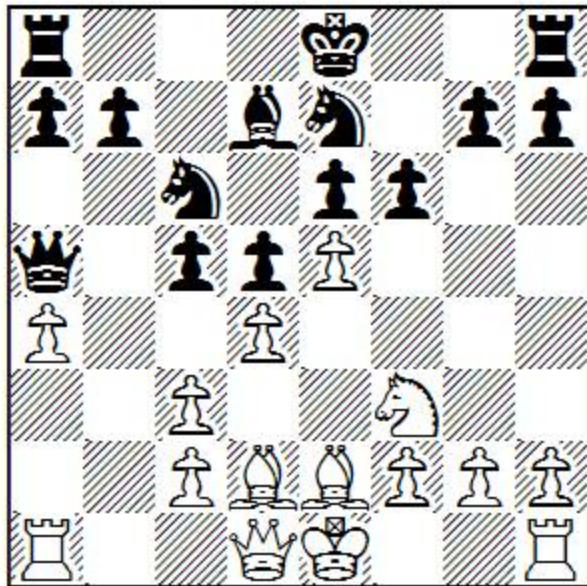
Another novelty. White's centre is undermined immediately after he has moved his c1-bishop a long way from a3. Previously 10 ... Qc7 was played (Kurajica-Timman, Skopje 1976), but more often 10 ... c4 with the idea of 11 h4 f6 (Fischer-Padevsky, Varna Olympiad 1962), or 11

0-0 f6 (Korchnoi also played this), but here Black was afraid of 11 Ng5!? (the source game: Stein-Uhlmann, Stockholm Interzonal 1962), for example:

1) 11 ... 0-0 12 0-0 f6 13 exf6 Rxf6 14 Bg4 h6 15 Nf3 Nc8? (15 ... Raf8!) 16 Re1 Nb6 17 Qc1 Raf8 (17 ... Nxa4? 18 Qa3 b5 19 Qd6 Qd8 20 Rxe6!) 18 Qa3 Nd8 19 Ne5! Qxa4?! (in desperation: 19 ... Rxf2 20 Rf1!!) 20 Qc1 Qb5 (Timman-Uhlmann, Skopje 1976) 21 Rb1! Qa4 22 Rb4 Qa5 23 Rxb6 and wins;

2) 11 ... h6 12 Nh3 0-0-0 13 Nf4! with some initiative (Kavalek-Uhlmann, Manila Interzonal 1976), although subsequent practice showed that Black has considerable defensive resources.

Now White is denied the knight sortie, but perhaps he can punish his opponent for the weakening of his position?



11 c4

The most natural reply: White opens up the position, trying to exploit the power of his two bishops. In the event of 11 exf6 (11 Rb1 Qc7!) 11 ... gxf6 12 0-0 0-0-0 13 Re1 c4 the position is a reasonable version for Black of the 10 ... c4 variation, and after 14 Qc1 Rhg8 15 Bf1 Ng6 16 Qa3 e5 (Tringov-Timman, Plovdiv 1983) or 14 Bf1 Ng6 (14 ... Nf5!? 15 Qc1 h5 Uhlmann) 15 Bh6 Rhg8 16 Qd2 (Anand-Arkhipov, Moscow 1987) 16 ... e5 he successfully solves his opening problems.

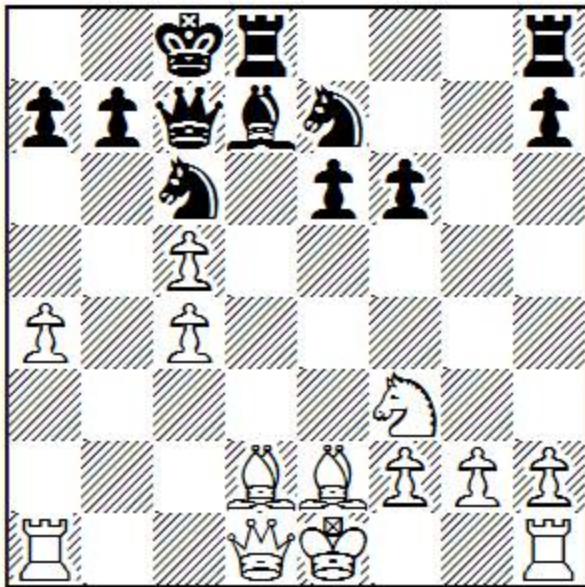
11 ... Qc7 12 cxd5

Or 12 exf6 gxf6 13 cxd5 Nxd5, and here instead of 14 c4 Spassky against Korchnoi (4th matchgame, Belgrade 1977/78) played 14 c3 0-0-0 15 0-0 Rhg8 16 Re1, but after 16 ... e5! 17 c4 Bh3 18 Bf1 (18 Ng5 Nc3!) 18 ... Nb6 19 d5 Nxc4! 20 dxc6 Qxc6 21 g3 Bxf1 22 Rxf1 e4 it was White who was playing for a draw. Later 16 g3 and 16 Kh1 became the subject of theoretical debates, but not 16 dxc5 e5 17 Kh1?! Nf4! 18 Bc4?! (18 Bxf4 Bh3!) 18 ... Rxc4 19 Bxf4 Rg4 20 Qe2? Rxf4 and wins (Lederman-Korchnoi, Beersheva 1978).

12 ... Nxd5 13 c4 Nde7 14 exf6 gxf6 15 dxc5

Comparatively best. Nothing is promised by 15 Bc3 0-0-0 16 d5 (16 0-0 cxd4 and ... Be8) 16 ... exd5 17 Bxf6 (17 cxd5 Be6) 17 ... Rhf8, or 15 d5 exd5 16 cxd5 Nxd5 17 Qc2 0-0-0 (Slobodjan-Zude, Bad Wörishofen 1998).

15 ... 0-0-0



For the pawn Black has a good position in the centre and the prospect of an attack on the g-file. Similar situations, where White captured on c5 and tried to gain an advantage in positions with an extra (albeit tripled) pawn and an open centre, occurred back in the Smyslov-Botvinnik matches, and usually Black was able to demonstrate the viability of his position.

16 Bc3 (16 a5 a6!) 16 ... e5! (opening the way for the bishop at d7 and seizing control of the d4-square) 17 Qd6

Not wishing to subject himself to the risk of an attack after 17 0-0 Rhg8, Timman hurries to exchange queens, hoping in the endgame to exploit the advantage of the two bishops and, for the moment, his extra pawn, which Black will have to spend some time regaining.

17 ... Nf5!?

The most consistent, although 17 ... Rhg8 18 Qxc7+ (18 Qxf6 Rg6! 19 Qf7 Rxd2) 18 ... Kxc7 19 g3 Bf5 is also possible, with a sharp ending.

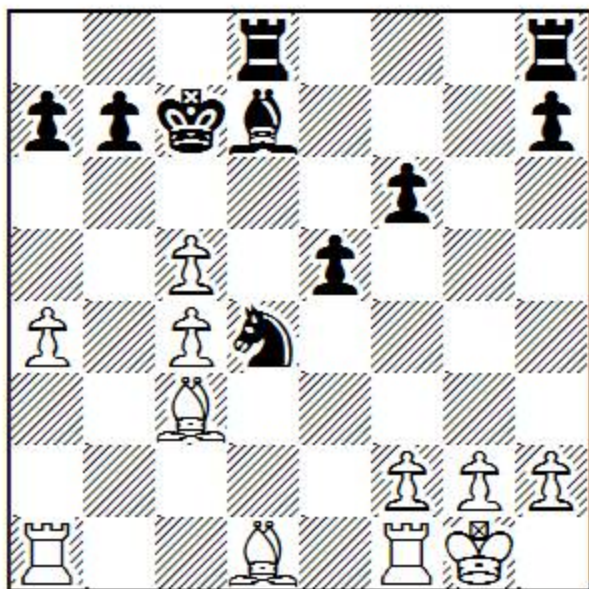
18 Qxc7+ (of course, not 18 Qxf6? Rdf8 19 Qg5 Rhg8 20 Qd2 Rxd2)

18 ... Kxc7 19 0-0

White can also hardly hope for success after 19 0-0-0 Nfd4 (19 ... Be6 20 Rhe1!) 20 Bxd4 Nxd4 21 Nxd4 exd4 22 Rxd4 Bxa4.

19 ... Nfd4 (if 19 ... Be6, then simply 20 Rfd1) 20 Nxd4 Nxd4 21 Bd1

In *Informator* Hartoch attached an exclamation mark to this move, but 21 Bxd4! exd4 22 Bd3 was sounder, blocking the potentially dangerous passed d-pawn. In this case 22 ... Kc6?! would have run into 23 Rfb1 Rde8 24 Rb5, while the attempt to dislodge the blockading bishop from d3 – 22 ... Be8?! would be refuted by 23 f4! Bg6? 24 f5 Bf7 25 a5! etc. 22 ... Rde8 23 a5 Bc8 is better, maintaining a dynamic balance: the pluses and minuses of the two sides' positions are mutually equivalent.



21 ... Kc6!

It would appear that the young Dutch grandmaster was horror-stricken by this reply: the black king suddenly rushes into battle, with the intention of eliminating the white pawns. But White did not yet have any grounds for panic.

22 Bxd4?!

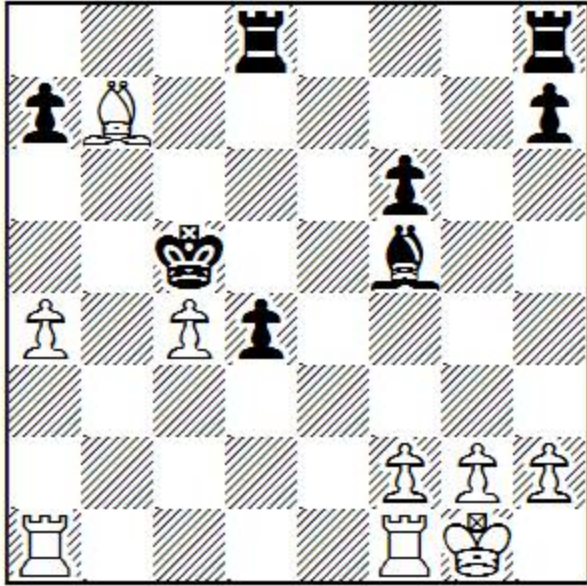
The first step towards the abyss: it was hardly right for White to give Black a strong passed pawn. If 22 Rb1 or 22 Bb4 there was the unpleasant reply 22 ... Bf5!, but the immediate undermining of the opponent's centre was more energetic – 22 f4! Kxc5 23 fxe5 fxe5 24 Re1 (Hartoch) 24 ... Kxc4 25 Rc1, and the activity of White's pieces, especially his two bishops, gives him a perfectly good game.

At the most responsible moment, when highly important decisions had to be taken, Timman begins acting uncertainly and in literally two moves he loses the battle.

22 ... exd4 23 Bf3+?

Probably this is already the decisive mistake. The bishop shouldn't have been moved from d1: if it could not block the pawn at d3, then at least it should have been kept on the queening square. White should have thrown all his forces into the battle with the d-pawn! 23 Rb1 was essential, in order after 23 ... d3 24 a5 d2 25 f4 Kxc5 26 Rxb7 Rhe8 27 Rxa7 Bf5 to bring up the king by 28 Kf2 and, apparently, escape the worst.

23 ... Kxc5 24 Bxb7 Bf5!



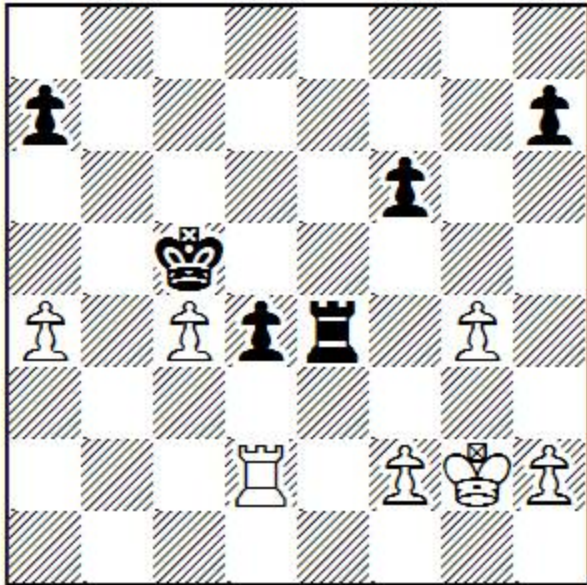
A very strong reply: now White cannot develop his rook via b1 and he has no defence against the threatened advance of the d-pawn. His extra pawn is not felt at all – the activity of the black king is far more important.

25 Bf3 (25 Bd5 Bc2! and ... d4-d3) 25 ... Rhe8 26 Ra2 Rb8 (26 ... d3!?) 27 Rd2 Rb1

27 ... Rb4 was also good, but Korchnoi has chosen a way to convert his advantage that involves the exchange of a pair of rooks and the bishops.

28 g4 (28 Be2 Reb8) 28 ... Ree1 29 Rxe1 Rxe1+ 30 Kg2 Be4 (technically simpler than 30 ... Bg6) 31 Bxe4 Rxe4

The fate of the game is decided by the passed d-pawn, supported by the king: the white king, cut off along the e-file, can merely watch as it inexorably advances towards the queening square.



32 Kf3 (Hartoch's idea 32 f3 is defeated by 32 ... Re3 33 Kf2 Ra3 and ... Rxa4) 32 ... Re5 33 h4 (or 33 Rc2(b2) d3! and ... Kd4) 33 ... Kxc4 34 Rc2+ Kb3 35 Rc7 d3 36 Rxh7 Rd5 37 Rb7+ Kc2 38 Rc7+ Kb1 39 Rb7+ Ka1 40 Rb5 Rd8 0-1

Korchnoi also won the 4th game, and in the end also the match ahead of schedule: 5½-2½. What was impressive was not only the score, but also the character of the play: Korchnoi played more freshly, forcefully and interestingly, and even such a brilliant, inventive player as Timman was unable to counter this. This confident victory over one of the strongest young players from the West became the start of the highest ascent in Korchnoi's chess career.

It was in the period from 1976 to 1980 that his brilliant competitive results were combined with an amazing richness of creative ideas, and Korchnoi's contribution to the development of chess reached its historic peak. And yet he was already nearly 50 years old! This achievement largely refuted previous impressions about the optimum age for the greatest achievements in chess.

Here one cannot help remembering a sentiment from the aforementioned letter by Karpov: 'V.Korchnoi's decision to betray his homeland distressed me, because the step taken by him places under threat the entire subsequent creative activity of this chess player.' It is interesting to ask, what exactly was this threat? Perhaps the imminent

boycott of the defector in all international tournaments where Soviet grandmasters were participating? Or perhaps Karpov had in mind the letter from the Soviet Federation to the FIDE Congress, suggesting that Korchnoi should be excluded from the forthcoming Candidates matches? However, the Congress and the 1976 Olympiad took place in Israel, and were boycotted by the Soviet Union and other countries of the communist bloc. 'In their absence,' writes Korchnoi, 'the letter from the USSR Chess Federation was read out, but in view of its absurdity it was not even discussed.'

The chess world held its breath in anticipation of the Candidates matches, in which a completely different intrigue had suddenly emerged ...

Rout in Evian

In order to reach a match for the world championship, Korchnoi had to overcome a 'triple barrier' of his former compatriots. The 'blocks' standing in his way were Petrosian, Polugayevsky and Spassky.

This is how he recalls his quarter-final match with Tigran Petrosian (Il Cioccio, spring 1977): 'The first test took place in an atmosphere of deep hostility. Our chess strengths were absolutely equal, but my nerves proved stronger.' The quality of the play in that very difficult match of 12 games was comparatively low, with good ideas alternating with bad mistakes. After four draws Korchnoi won the 5th game, but Petrosian immediately hit back in the 6th. Then there was another draw. In the 8th game the ex-world champion achieved an obvious positional advantage, but in time-trouble he suddenly played 33 e3-e4??, leaving his rook at c1 en prise to a bishop at g5. This inexplicable blunder decided the fate of the game, and probably of the match as a whole. Korchnoi won 6½-5½ (+2-1=9).

The semi-final match with Lev Polugayevsky (Evian, summer 1977) turned out quite differently. Korchnoi demonstrated genuinely strong, confident and interesting play – and as a result he literally crushed his opponent. He indicated his match strategy straight away in the first game: employing a very rare continuation, he unexpectedly went into an ending where he was the exchange up, but Polugayevsky had compensation that was more than sufficient to maintain the balance. However, acting with great energy and invention, Korchnoi gradually converted his exchange advantage.

This game probably suggested to him that complicated, non-standard endgame positions were a weak spot for the opponent and that by going into such endings it was possible to neutralise Polugayevsky's brilliant opening preparation. In the next game too, events developed along similar lines.

Game 24

L.Polugayevsky-V.Korchnoi

Candidates Semi-Final Match, Evian 1977, 2nd game

Queen's Indian Defence E19

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e6 3 Nf3 b6 4 g3 Bb7 (4 ... Ba6 – *Game Nos.90, 91 and 98*) 5 Bg2 Be7 6 0-0 (6 Nc3 Ne4 7 Bd2 – *Game Nos.97 and 99*) 6 ... 0-0 7 Nc3

For the 1980 match between the same opponents, Polugayevsky prepared the sharp 7 d5!? (*Volume 3, Game No.27*).

7 ... Ne4 8 Qc2 Nxc3 9 Qxc3 f5

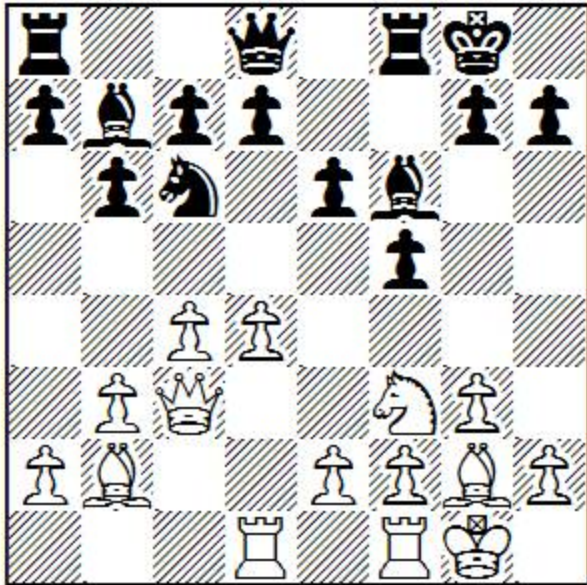
The other continuations in this popular opening *tabiya*, which has also been employed many times by Korchnoi, are mentioned in the notes to Euwe-Keres (*Volume 2, Game No.23*).

10 b3 Bf6 11 Bb2 Nc6

Three years later 11 ... d6 12 Rad1 a5!? was tested (instead of the usual 12 ... Qe7, as Reshevsky played back in 1940, and then also Botvinnik against Tal, 21st matchgame, Moscow 1960) 13 Ne1 Bxg2 14 Nxg2 Nc6, and Black twice maintained the balance (Polugayevsky-Korchnoi, 2nd and 4th matchgames, Buenos Aires 1980).

12 Rad1!

A more accurate move than 12 Qd2, to which Black also replied 12 ... Ne7 13 Ne1 Bxg2 14 Nxg2 g5!? 15 Rad1 Ng6 16 f3 Qe7 17 e4 fxe4 18 fxe4 Bg7 19 Rxf8+ Rxf8 20 Rf1 Rxf1+ 21 Kxf1 $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ (Pirc-Euwe, Amsterdam Olympiad 1954).



12 ... Ne7

The usual line, which replaced 12 ... Qe8 13 Qc2 Nd8 14 d5 Bxb2 15 Qxb2 exd5 16 cxd5 c5? 17 dxc6 with advantage to White (Boleslavsky-Taimanov, Zürich Candidates 1953). But in the game Miles-Korchnoi (Wijk aan Zee 1978) Black chose 12 ... Qe7!? and after 13 Qd2 Nd8 14 d5?! Bxb2 15 Qxb2 d6 (with the idea of ... e6-e5) 16 dxe6 Nxe6 17 b4 (17 e3 a5 is equal) 17 ... f4! 18 Rd2 Rf6 19 Qc3 Rf8 20 a3 Qe8! 21 Qd3 Qh5 he developed a dangerous attack and won on the 33rd move.

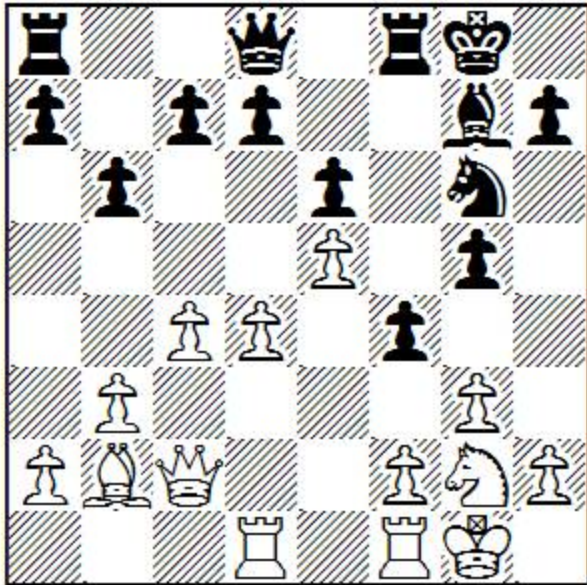
13 Ne1 Bxg2 14 Nxg2 g5!?

In the footsteps of Euwe! It was traditionally thought that in such quiet variations of the Queen's Indian Defence White has a minimal plus, that he is not threatened by anything, and that he can play for a win without particular risk by gradually intensifying the pressure. But Black's move shows that he is not intending patiently to fight only for equality and that he wants to seize the initiative on the kingside.

15 Qc2! (preparing e2-e4) 15 ... Ng6 16 e4 f4

Of course, 16 ... fxe4?! 17 Qxe4 would suit White fine, since in that case ... g7-g5 would prove to be a serious weakening.

17 e5 Bg7



18 Qe4

White maintains his pawn centre. Keene in *Informator* and after him Matanovic and Ugrinovic in the *Encyclopaedia of Chess Openings* recommended 18 Ba3 'with a slight advantage to White'. But after 18 ... Rf7 (or immediately 18 ... c5, with the idea of 19 dxc5 Qe7!) 19 Qe4 c5 double-edged play develops: 20 h4?! gxh4 21 Nxf4 Nxf4 22 gxf4 Qf8 23 Bc1 Bh6 and ... Bxf4, or 20 dxc5 Nxe5 21 Bb2 Nc6 22 Bxg7 Kxg7 23 gxf4 gxf4 24 Kh1 bxc5 25 Nxf4 Kh8 26 Nd3 Rf5 27 Rg1 Qe7 with approximate equality.

18 ... Qe7 19 Rd3 Rad8 20 Re1 d5! (an excellent way of creating counterplay) **21 exd6**

Of course, not 21 cxd5 Rxd5, but now the bishop at g7 becomes active.

21 ... Qxd6 22 Red1

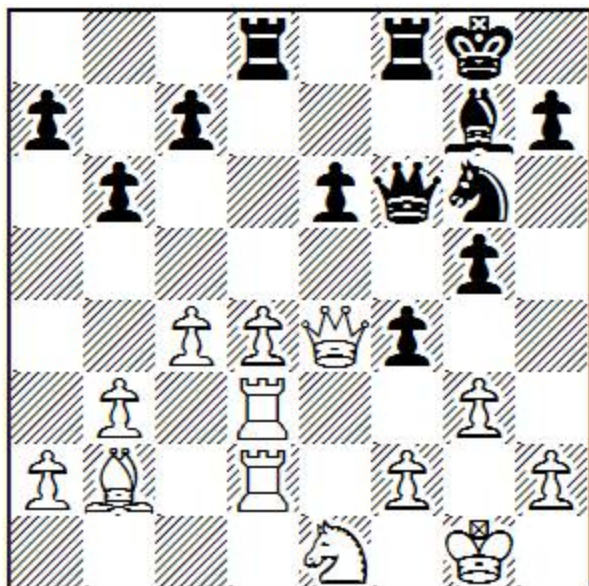
In the event of 22 Qxe6+? Qxe6 23 Rxe6 Ne5! 24 Rd1 Kf7 Black would have trapped the rook – the tactical justification of Korchnoi's idea! Therefore White supports his weakened d4-pawn, hoping subsequently to exploit the weakness in the opponent's position. Black, by contrast, is counting on a counterattack using his advanced g- and f-pawns.

22 ... Qe7 23 Ne1 Qf6

23 ... g4!? came into consideration, but apparently on the previous move Korchnoi had already intended ... Qf6-f5 with the exchange of queens and the consistent implementation of his plan. His opponent thought for a long time ...

24 R1d2

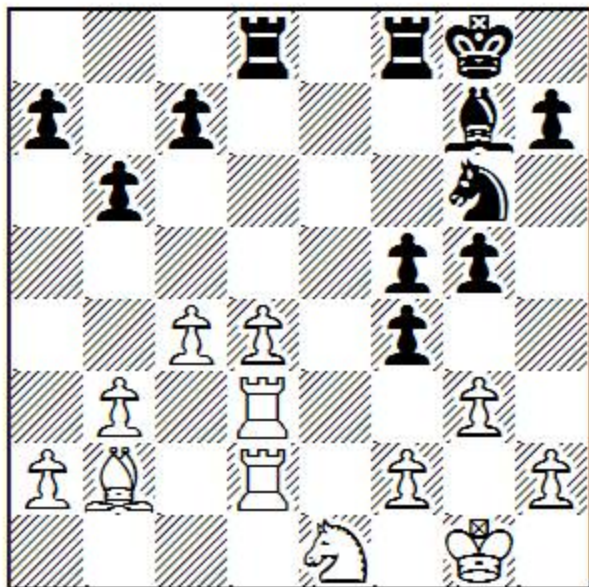
Up to a certain point Polugayevsky played quite logically, but when the situation became rather 'wild', lacking customary guidelines, he began to lose confidence. Thus here by 24 g4! Nh4 (otherwise Nf3) 25 b4 he could have obtained his desire – a slightly better and sound position, although, of course, there would still have been a complicated battle in prospect.



24 ... Qf5! 25 Qxf5?

A seemingly natural, but faulty exchange, condemning White to an inferior endgame. After 25 Re2 he would have retained an equal game, and even possible chances of an advantage, for example: 25 ... Qxe4?! 26 Rxe4 c5 27 Rxe6 cxd4 28 Kf1, or 25 ... c5?! 26 Qxf5 exf5 27 dxc5 bxc5 28 Bxg7 Kxg7 29 Red2!, seizing the d-file. 25 ... Rde8 is evidently better, with the idea of 26 Ba3 Qxe4 27 Rxe4 Rf5! or 26 Qc6 e5 27 Ba3 (27 Qxc7? e4) 27 ... Ne7! with equality (it is extremely dangerous to play 28 Qxc7?! e4 29 Rd1 Rf7 with the threat of ... Qg4, ... Nf5 and ... e4-e3).

25 ... exf5!



With time-trouble imminent, Polugayevsky apparently underestimated this capture: the opponent voluntarily doubles his pawns! But Korchnoi subtly sensed the dynamics of the resulting position: Black will most probably be able to seize control of the open e-file (in view of the unfortunate position of the white rook at d3) and his pawn group on the kingside constitutes a great strength.

26 Ng2 g4!? (another surprise: 26 ... fxg3 27 hxg3 f4 suggests itself, immediately undoubling the pawns) 27 Nxf4

27 f3 came into consideration, but White, short of time, may not have liked 27 ... h5 28 Kf2 fxg3+ 29 hxg3 f4.

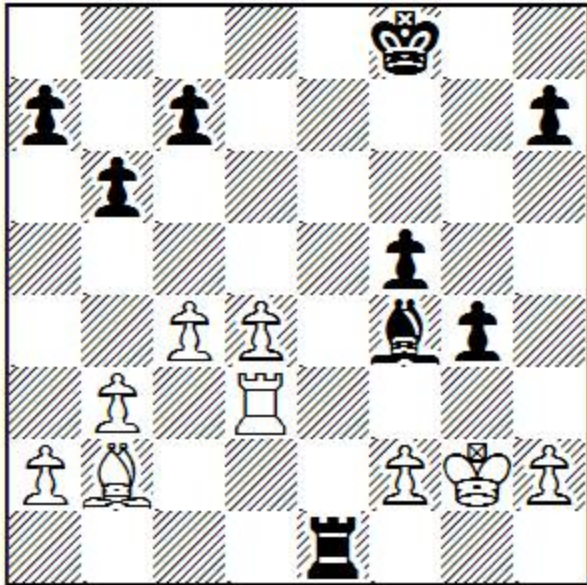
27 ... Nxf4 28 gxf4 Bh6! 29 Re2 Bxf4

After quickly getting rid of his doubled pawns, on 'his' flank Black has obtained a far-advanced pawn majority. White has to play very accurately to hold this ending.

30 Re6?

Completely thrown off balance both by Korchnoi's powerful pressure and by the unanticipated turn of events, Polugayevsky makes what is probably the decisive mistake. 30 Rd1 was essential, continuing to fight for the e-file, and hence for a draw.

30 ... Rfe8 (now the e-file is under Black's control) 31 Rf6 Re1+ 32 Kg2 Rf8 (one black rook invades the opponent's position, while the other eliminates his active rook) 33 Rxf8+ Kxf8



34 d5?!

Some commentators recommended 34 Ba3+, but after 34 ... Kf7 35 d5 Re2 White has nothing better than to go into a lost rook endgame: 36 d6 cxd6 37 Bxd6 Bxd6 38 Rxd6 Rxa2 39 b4 Ra4 40 Rd7+ Kg6 etc. 34 Bc3 Re2 35 a4(a3) was probably more tenacious, but here too after 35 ... h5 White has no way of opposing the combined onslaught of the black pieces.

34 ... Bd6 (34 ... Re2!?) 35 Bc3 Rc1! 36 Bd2 Rc2 37 a4 f4

The white pawns on the queenside are 'frozen', whereas on the kingside Black's pawns advance, at the same time creating, with minimal forces, an attack on the king (a favourite endgame stratagem of Korchnoi!).

38 h3 f3+ 39 Kf1 h5 40 hxg4 hxg4 41 Ke1 0-1

The sealed move. White resigned without resuming, not waiting for 41 ... Bc5 42 Be3 Re2+ 43 Kf1 Bxe3 44 Rxe3 Rxe3 45 fxe3 g3 or 42 b4 Bd6 43 Rd4 g3!

In the third game, where soon after the opening White reached a technical endgame with bishop and knight against rook and pawn, Polugayevsky again did not make use of all his chances, whereas with Korchnoi was able to set him insoluble problems enterprising play. After this win the score became 3-0 and the outcome of the match was no

longer in doubt. But there were still numerous events to come, interesting from the purely chess point of view.

Incidentally, the games of this match and even Korchnoi's name were not published in the general Soviet press, and sometimes we learned the results after a week's delay (in fact, how could a Soviet player be whitewashed by some villainous defector?!). I remember how on one occasion my trainer Alexander Nikitin, with a conspiratorial smile, invited me 'to look at three recent games'. He showed them without making any comments, merely clicking his tongue in admiration after certain moves. And then he asked: 'What do you think, who were the players?' Straightforward deduction suggested to me that these were the first three games from the Korchnoi-Polugayevsky match. But it was hard to imagine that all three had been won by one player! These wins made a great impression on me, in particular in view of Korchnoi's irrepressible energy and inventiveness, which in the eyes of a 14-year-old candidate master did not tally with his image of a 45-year-old grandmaster ...

After a double drawing respite, new trials awaited Polugayevsky. In the 6th game, with an overwhelming lead, Korchnoi ventured an experiment that was very bold for those times.

Game 25

L.Polugayevsky-V.Korchnoi

Candidates Semi-Final Match, Evian 1977, 6th game

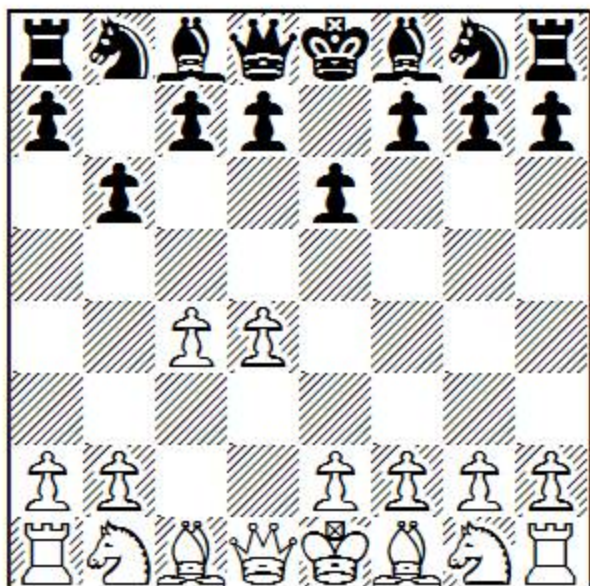
English Defence A40

1 d4 e6 2 c4 b6!?

At that time this was considered to be an irregular, 'crooked' defence, the theory of which was in a rudimentary state. In the 19th century it was occasionally played by English and American players, in the early 1920s – by the hypermodernists Breyer, Réti and Nimzowitsch, and in 1975 it was seriously taken up by Tony Miles. His example was followed by Keene, Stean, Speelman, Plaskett, Conquest, Hodgson, King, Short, Adams, Sadler ... So that this variation can rightfully be called the English Defence.

It was no accident that Korchnoi used one of the bold ideas of Miles, who was distinguished by his original handling of the opening (on one occasion he succeeded in beating none other than Karpov with Black after 1 e4 a6?! 2 d4 b5). This had an obvious psychological implication:

deviating from well-known theoretical paths was especially unpleasant for an opponent exhausted by his preceding sufferings.



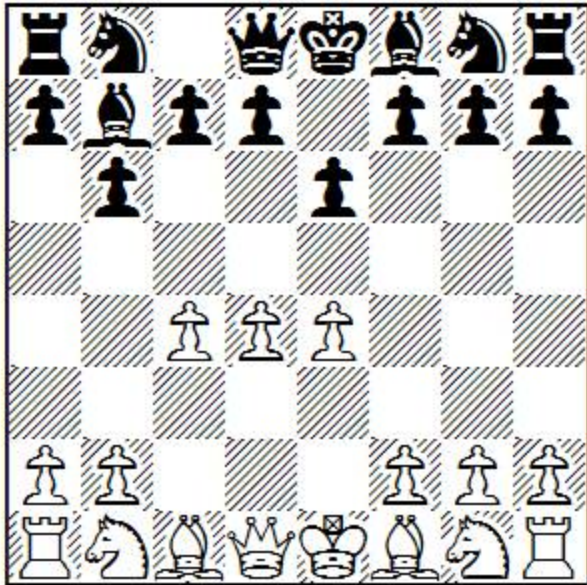
3 e4

The critical occupation of the centre. After the less aggressive 3 Nf3 Bb7 4 g3 Bb4+ 5 Bd2 (Rubinstein-Nimzowitsch, Gothenburg 1920) 5 ... Bxf3! 6 exf3 Bxd2+ Black has good counterplay.

To 3 d5 Miles used to reply 3 ... Qh4, but when he lost to Karpov after 4 Nc3! Bb4 5 Bd2 Nf6 6 e3 (Bugojno 1978), he switched to 3 ... Nf6. And after 3 a3 he used to choose 3 ... g6 or the old move 3 ... f5 (Brien-Green, London 1856; Wisker-Bird, 3rd matchgame, London 1873), believing in Black's resources after 4 d5 Nf6 5 g3 Bb7. This belief was shared by Speelman, and Short, and Morozevich, who in this way gained draws against me (Frankfurt rapidplay 2000) and Karpov (Cannes 2002).

3 ... Bb7

After this White is at the crossroads.



4 Qc2

A new way of defending the e4-pawn. Before this game and afterwards they defended with the pawn, knight or bishop:

1) 4 f3 Bb4+ (4 ... f5 5 exf5 Nh6!? 6 fxe6 Nf5! 7 Ne2 Bd6 is sharper, Ree-Miles, Wijk aan Zee 1979) 5 Bd2 (5 Nd2?! f5! with the idea of 6 exf5 Qh4+) 5 ... Bxd2+ (in tournaments in 1977 Böhm upheld 5 ... Qh4+) 6 Qxd2 Nh6!? 7 Nc3 0-0 8 0-0-0 f5 with interesting play (Korchnoi-Speelman, New York rapidplay 1995);

2) 4 Nc3 Bb4 and now 5 Bd3 f5! (Mason-Tinsley, London 1899; Kaplan-Miles, Sao Paulo 1977; Adorjan-Spassky, Toluca Interzonal 1982), 5 d5 Qe7 (Tartakower-Réti, Gothenburg 1920), 5 f3 f5!? (apart from 5 ... Qh4+) 6 exf5 Nh6 (Panno-Miles, Buenos Aires 1979), or 5 Qc2 Qh4 6 Bd3 f5 (Farago-Miles, Hastings 1976/77), in each case with double-edged play;

3) 4 Bd3! (the best reply) 4 ... Nc6 (Knott-Perren, 1st American Congress, New York 1857; 4 ... Bb4+ 5 Bd2 Boden-Owen, 7th matchgame, London 1858) 5 Ne2 Nb4 6 Nbc3 Nxd3+ 7 Qxd3, and Black's two bishops do not altogether compensate for White's spatial advantage. Therefore the sharp 4 ... f5!? 5 exf5 is in fashion, and since 5 ... Bxg2? 6 Qh5+ g6 7 fxg6 Bg7 8 gxh7+ Kf8 (Browne-Miles, Tilburg 1978) 9 Nh3! is too dangerous for Black, he began playing 5 ... Bb4+! 6 Kf1 Nf6 – here the theoretical duels are still continuing.

4 ... Qh4!?

Again threatening the e4-pawn! But this is a risky move: the queen comes under attack. It looks sounder to play 4 ... Bb4+ 5 Nd2 (5 Bd2 Qe7) and then 5 ... f5 6 exf5 Nh6!? (Lalic-Kengis, Manila Olympiad 1992), 5 ... Nf6 6 Bd3 c5 7 d5 b5! (Rogozenko-Teske, Dresden 1996), or 5 ... c5 6 d5 f5! 7 a3 Ba5 (V.Mikhalevski-Young, Santa Monica 2004). 4 g6 5 Nc3 Bg7 6 Be3 Ne7 7 0-0-0 0-0 8 f4 f5 9 e5 d5 has also been played (Levitt-Short, Calcutta 1998).

Now White has many tempting continuations, but which of them promises an advantage? I can imagine how Polugayevsky must have grown nervous, how long he must have stared at this non-theoretical position, holding his head in his hands ... Being an inquisitive researcher, he did not like having to solve new opening problems at the board, and the score in the match in no way disposed him towards taking high-quality intuitive decisions.

5 Nd2

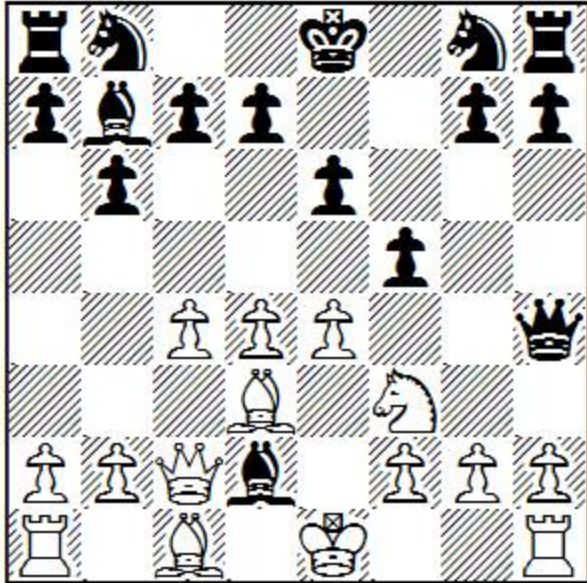
Avoiding 5 Nc3 Bb4 6 Bd3 (6 d5 Bxc3+! Ivanchuk-Sadler, Monaco blindfold 1998) 6 ... f5, transposing into the aforementioned Farago-Miles game, or 6 ... Bxc3+!? 7 bxc3 f5 – this was a novelty from the 1990s. At that time 5 Bd3 f5, 5 ... Bb4+ or 5 ... Nc6 had also been tried, as well as 5 d5 f5! 6 exf5 exd5 with equality.

5 ... Bb4 6 Bd3 f5?!

6 ... Qg4 is perhaps more accurate, for example: 7 Kf1 f5! (Quinn-Speelman, Dublin Zonal 1993; Levitt-Ehlvest, New York 1994), or 7 Ne2 (intending 0-0) 7 ... Qxg2 8 Rg1 Qxh2 9 Rxc7 Nc6 with sharp play.

7 Nf3 Bxd2+

Later 7 ... Qg4?! 8 0-0 also occurred, or 7 ... Qh5 8 0-0 Nf6 9 h3 (quiet prophylaxis) 9 ... 0-0?! (9 ... Bxd2 10 Nxd2 Nc6 is better) 10 e5 g5? 11 exf6 g4 12 hxg4 fxg4 13 Ne5 ... 1-0 (Kiriakov-Shepherd, Port Erin 2000).



8 Kf1?

Here are the fruits of Black's opening experiment. Nothing is offered by 8 Nxd2 Nf6 9 g3 Qh3 (9 ... Qh5!?) 10 Bf1 Qh5 11 Bg2 0-0 12 0-0 Nc6 13 Qc3 (Kiriakov-Tratar, Pardubice 1995) 13 ... e5! with the idea of 14 dxe5 Nxe5! But it is surprising that Polugayevsky did not play 8 Bxd2 Qg4 9 Ne5! (9 h3 Qxg2 10 Ke2 Qg6! 11 Rag1 Qf7 12 d5 Nf6 is not so clear) 9 ... Qxg2 10 0-0-0 with a dangerous initiative for the sacrificed material.

Since now 10 ... Qxf2? 11 Rhg1 Qxd4 12 Bc3 Qe3+ 13 Kb1 or 10 ... Bxe4? 11 Rhg1 Bxd3 12 Qxd3 Qe4 (12 ... Qxf2 13 Rxc7) 13 Qg3 g6 14 Nxc6 is clearly bad for Black, he has defended by 10 ... fxe4 11 Be2 Nf6 (if 11 ... Nc6 12 Nxc6 Bxc6, then 13 d5!) 12 Be3 Qh3 13 Rdc1 Nc6! (Rogers) 14 Nxc6 (but not 14 Rxc7?! Nxd4! or 14 Rg3 Qf5 15 Rg5?! Nxd4! Webster-Adams, Prestwich 1990) 14 ... Bxc6 15 Rxc7 Rg8 (15 ... 0-0-0!?) 16 Rxc8+ Nxc8 17 d5 exd5 18 cxd5 Bxd5 19 Qxc7 Ne7, holding the position.

However, 12 Rhg1! is far stronger, since 12 ... Qxf2? runs into 13 Bh6!! with the threat of Bh5+ and Qxf2, while after 12 ... Qxh2 13 Be3! the threat of trapping the queen (Rh1 and Rdc1) prevents Black from successfully completing his development: if 13 ... Nc6 the restrained 14 Qc3 is possible, as well as the impatient 14 Rh1 Nxd4 15 Bxd4 Qf4+ 16 Kb1 0-0 (16 ... Qf5 17 Rhg1) 17 Nxd7! Nxd7 18 Bxc7! with an

attack. 12 ... Qh3 13 Rxc7 Nc6 14 Nxc6 Bxc6 15 d5! also favours White.

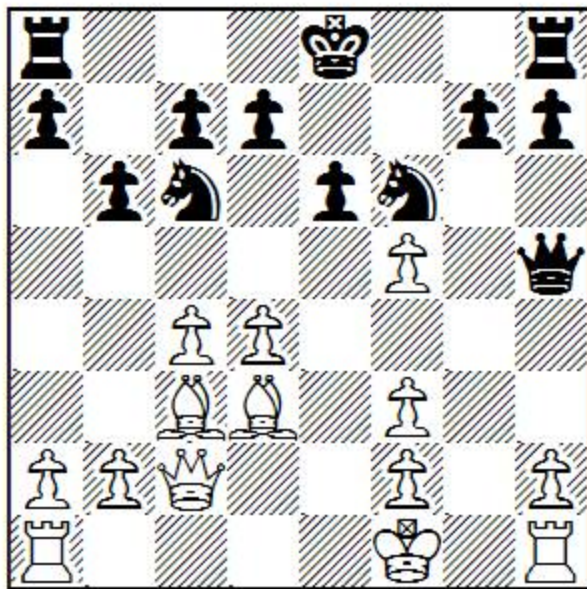
And if immediately 11 ... Qh3, then 12 Rhg1 again sets Black difficult problems: 12 ... d6 13 Rxc7! dxe5 14 Rxc7, or 12 ... g6 13 Bg4 Qh4 14 d5! etc.

After the impulsive move in the game White does not gain any serious compensation for the weakened position of his king.

8 ... Qh5 9 Bxd2 Nf6 (another attack on the e4-pawn) 10 exf5?! (10 e5 Ne4 was nevertheless safer for White) 10 ... Bxf3! 11 gxf3

After the 'bold' 11 fxe6?! there could have followed not only 11 ... Bb7, but also 11 ... Nc6! 12 exd7+ Kf7 13 gxf3 (13 Bc3 Bg4) 13 ... Nxd4 14 Qc3 Qh3+ 15 Ke1 Qg2 16 Rf1 Nxf3+ 17 Kd1 Rhd8 18 Kc2 Rxd7 19 Rad1 Rad8 with advantage to Black.

11 ... Nc6 12 Bc3



12 ... 0-0

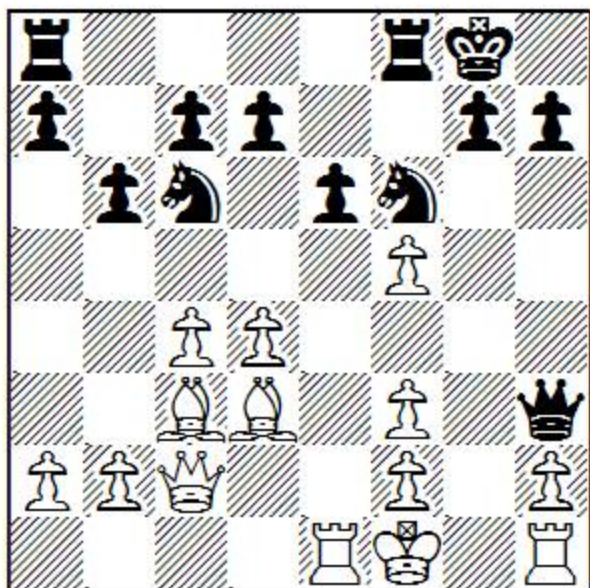
The premature 12 ... Qxf3 would have helped the opponent to coordinate his forces – 13 Rg1 0-0-0 14 Be2 etc. However, more chances of an advantage would have been retained by 12 ... 0-0-0!, analogous to the aforementioned Quinn-Speelman game (which went 6 ... Qg4 7 Kf1 f5 8 Ngf3 Bxd2 9 Ne5 Qh4 10 Nf3 Qh5 11 Bxd2 Nf6 12 exf5 Bxf3 13 gxf3 Nc6 14 Bc3 0-0-0!).

13 Re1?!

A waste of a tempo. White's position would still have been not so bad, had he played 13 Rg1!, preparing to bring out his rook and evacuate his king.

13 ... Qh3+!

Again an unnerving move. Polugayevsky was expecting the natural 13 ... Qxf3, but then after 14 Rg1 Qh3+ 15 Rg2 White has no reason for complaint: his bishops are very strong, and he may even be able to seize the initiative.



14 Ke2

After 14 Kg1?! Nh5 15 Qd2 Ne7! White would have had to urgently exchange queens to avoid a mating attack: 16 Qg5 Nxf5 17 Qg4 Nf4 18 Be4 (18 Bf1 Qh6) 18 ... Nh4 19 Qxh3 Nxh3+ 20 Kf1 Rad8, and the black knights are stronger than the white bishops.

14 ... Rae8 (mobilisation, although some advantage would have been given by 14 ... Qh4!? with the idea of 15 fxe6 Nxd4+ 16 Bxd4 Qxd4 17 Kf1 dxe6) 15 Kd1?!

15 fxe6 Rxe6 16 Kd2 was correct.

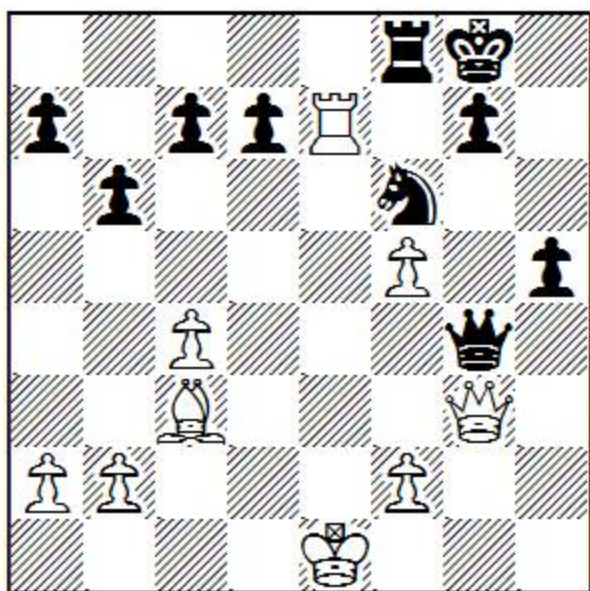
15 ... e5! (again Black does not capture on f3!) 16 dxe5 Nxe5

The position has finally clarified. White has not managed to relieve the pawn tension in time, and he has been left with tripled pawns, which begin to fall like ripe fruit.

17 Be2 (17 Bxe5 Rxe5 18 Rxe5 Qxf3+ was no better – Keene) 17 ... Nxf3! 18 Qd3 Rxe2 19 Rxe2 (19 Kxe2? Qh5 and wins) 19 ... Qg2 20 Rhe1 Nxe1 21 Kxe1 Qxh2

Keene attaches a question mark to this move, recommending 21 ... Qg1+ 22 Kd2 Qxh2. Now 23 Re7? is not possible on account of 23 ... Qxf2+, while in the event of 23 Kc2 Qd6 24 Qxd6 cxd6 Black has the better ending (25 Re7 h5!). However, after 23 f3! there is still all to play for.

22 Re7! Qg1+ (not 22 ... Rf7 23 Bxf6 with equality, but 22 ... Qh6!? was interesting) 23 Ke2 Qg4+ 24 Ke1 h5 25 Qg3!



25 ... Qxg3?!

But this is indeed an inaccuracy. In another version of the rook ending – after 25 ... Rf7! (Keene) 26 Bxf6 gxf6 27 Qxg4+ (27 Re4? Qxg3 28 fxf3 Kg7 and ... Kh6-g5) 27 ... hxf4 28 Re4 Rg7 Black would have had far more chances of success.

26 fxf3 Rf7 27 Bxf6 gxf6 28 Re8+ Kg7 29 Kf2 Kh6 30 b4!

After reaching a rook ending a pawn down, Polugayevsky resists with all his might and creates real counterplay. It is hard to say whether Korchnoi could have improved Black's play during the following series of time-trouble moves (a detailed analysis of this endgame does not come within our remit).

30 ... Kg5 31 Ra8 Kxf5 32 Rxa7 d6 33 a4 Ke6 34 a5 bxa5 35 Rxa5

35 bxa5 Kd7 36 Ra8?! (36 Rb7 Rf8) 36 ... Re7! 37 a6 Re5 etc. was evidently less good for White.

35 ... f5 36 c5! Rh7

If 36 ... Rg7 there could have followed 37 Ra7, for example: 37 ... dxc5 38 Ra6+ Kd5 39 Ra5 Kc4 40 Rxc5+ Kxb4 41 Rxf5 Rh7 42 Rf4+ Kb5 43 Rh4 c5 44 Ke2 c4 45 Kd2 Kb4 46 Kc2 with a draw.

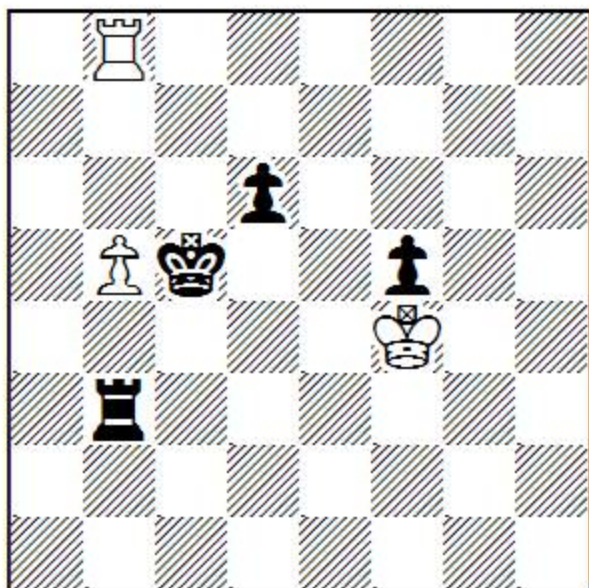
37 cxd6 cxd6 38 b5 h4

In the event of 38 ... Rc7 (38 ... Rb7!?) 39 Ra2 there is no win by either 39 ... d5 40 Ra6+ Ke5 41 Rh6 Rc2+ 42 Kf3 Rc3+ 43 Kf2 Rb3 44 Rxh5 Rxb5 45 g4, or 39 ... Rb7 40 Rb2 Kd5 41 Kf3 Kc5 42 Kf4 Rxb5 43 Rh2 Rb4+ 44 Kxf5 Rb5 45 Ke4.

39 gxh4 Rxh4 40 Ra8 Rb4 41 Rb8 Kd5 42 Kf3?

With their flags about to fall, both players had given up recording the game and, unaware that the control on move 40 had been reached, they continued playing at blitz tempo. As a result White missed the draw which was now very close: 42 Rb6! Kc5 43 Rc6+ (Keene) or 42 ... Rb3 43 Ke2 f4 44 Kf2 Ke5 45 Rb8 d5 46 b6 Kd6 47 Rf8.

42 ... Rb3+? (but Black too misses a win by 42 ... Kc5! 43 Rf8 f4 44 Rf5+ d5 45 Ke2 Rd4) **43 Kf4 Kc5**



44 Rc8+?

A blunder. White should have stopped, recovered his breath and made the simple move 44 Kxf5, which after 44 ... Rxb5 45 Ra(d)8 or 45

Rc8+ leads to a drawn ending with rook against rook and pawn.

44 ... Kxb5 45 Kxf5 Re3!

Cutting off White's king along the e-file, after which his further resistance is pointless. This situation probably reminded Korchnoi of the ending of his third matchgame with Timman, where his d-pawn, supported by the king, equally successfully advanced to the queening square (*Game No.23*).

46 Kf4 Re1 47 Rd8 Kc5 48 Rc8+ Kd4 49 Kf3 d5 50 Kf2 Re5 51 Ra8 Kc3 52 Ra3+ Kb4 53 Ra1 d4 54 Rc1 d3 55 Rc8 d2 56 Rb8+ Kc3 57 Rc8+ Kd3 58 Rd8+ Kc2 59 Rc8+ Kd1 0-1

I remember how Vladimir Bagirov, who at that time was Polugayevsky's second, demonstrated the games from this match in the Burevestnik Chess Club on his return to Baku and complained of the 'difficult match fate' of his protégé. I found it very interesting to look as though from one side at the analyses, stories and experiences of a person who had been in the very thick of things. To my surprise, I learned that in fact the struggle had been much tougher than it appeared – especially in the second half of the match. Polugayevsky's opening preparation was of very high quality, and at times he was able to pose Korchnoi rather serious problems.

Bagirov was especially upset by the 7th game, where there occurred a line of the Meran Variation, on the preparation of which he and Polugayevsky had spent much time and effort.

Game 26

V.Korchnoi-L.Polugayevsky

Candidates Semi-Final Match, Evian 1977, 7th game

Semi-Slav Defence D47

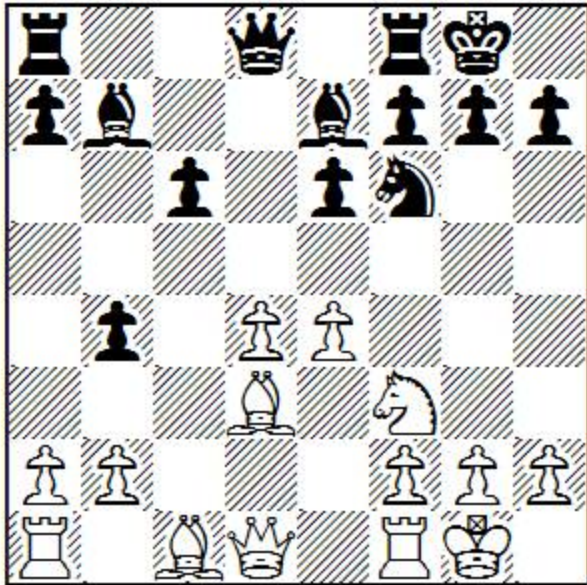
1 c4 Nf6 2 Nc3 e6 3 Nf3 d5 4 d4 c6 5 e3 Nbd7 6 Bd3 dxc4 7 Bxc4 b5 8 Bd3 Bb7
(Larsen's creation – the so-called 'improved Meran')

9 0-0

Earlier 9 e4 was more popular (*Volume 4, Game Nos.43-47*).

9 ... b4 (9 ... a6 – *Game No.105*) 10 Ne4 Be7 11 Nxf6+ Nxf6 12 e4 0-0

The 5th game went 12 ... Rc8?! 13 Qa4 a5 14 Rd1 0-0 and Black gradually equalised. But after 13 a3 (Keene) or 13 Qe2 it is far harder to do this: the rook move may prove to be a waste of a tempo.



13 Qc2

At that time 13 Qe2 and 13 e5 were regarded as the main continuations, and this is also the case nowadays, for example:

1) 13 Qe2 c5 14 dxc5 Nd7 15 c6! Bxc6 16 Be3 (16 Rd1 Nc5! Kramnik-Lautier, Monaco blindfold 2000) 16 ... Bb7 17 Rfc1 Bd6 (Savon-Vaganian, 38th USSR Championship, Riga 1970; Kasimdzhanov-Akopian, Erevan 2001), 17 ... Qb8 (Browne-Polugayevsky, Manila Interzonal 1976), or 17 ... Qa5, as M.Gurevich played against Lautier and Piket (2000), in each case with a minimal advantage to White;

2) 13 e5 Nd7 14 Qc2 h6 15 Bh7+ Kh8 16 Be4 Qb6 17 Be3 c5! 18 dxc5 Bxc5?! 19 Rad1! (a novelty; 19 Bxb7 Qxb7 20 Bxc5 Rfc8 with equality; 19 Bxc5?! Bxe4 20 Bxb6 Bxc2 21 Bc7 Rfc8 22 Bd6 a5 Polugayevsky-Larsen, Palma de Mallorca Interzonal 1970) 19 ... Bxe3 20 Rxd7 Rac8 21 Rxb7 Rxc2 22 Rxb6 Rxf2 23 Rxf2 Bxb6 24 Kf1 Bxf2 25 Kxf2, and White's two minor pieces outweighed the rook and pawn (3rd game).

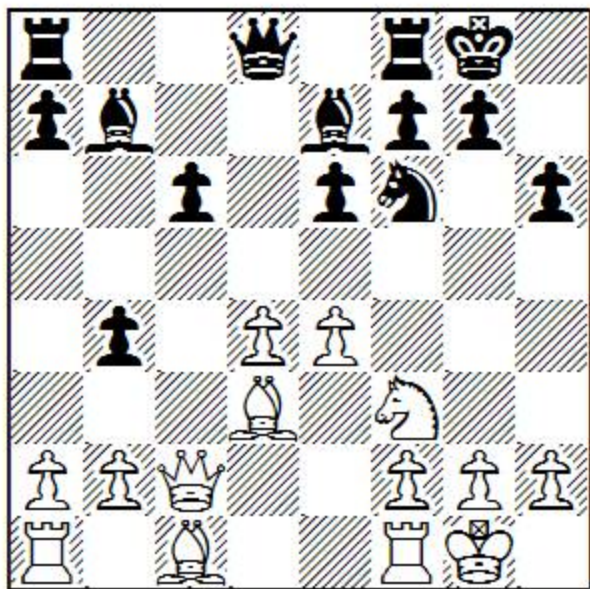
This endgame can be avoided by 19 ... Bxe4 20 Rad1 Rad8, but here too White retains some pressure: 21 Bg5!? (after 21 Rd6 Qa5 22 Bxc5 Nxc5 23 Qc4 there is 23 ... Rc8) 21 ... Bxf2+ (21 ... hxg5? 22 Nxg5 is bad for Black, while if 21 ... f6, then 22 Bh4) 22 Rxf2 Nf6 23 Rxd8 (23 Qe1 Rxd1 24 Qxd1 Ng4! 25 Bh4 Rc8 26 Ne1 Nxf2 27 Bxf2

Qa5 is unclear) 23 ... Nxe4 24 Rxf8+ Kh7 25 Bh4, obtaining rook, bishop and knight for the queen.

Apparently, Polugayevsky underestimated the drawbacks to 18 ... Bxc5?! in his preparations. Otherwise he would have found the simple 18 ... Nxc5! (a novelty of the 1990s) 19 Bxb7 Qxb7 20 Bxc5 Rfc8, or 19 Bxc5 Bxe4 20 Qxe4 Bxc5 21 Rac1 Rad8 followed by ... Rd5 and ... Rfd8 with equality.

Now instead of 14 Qc2 White plays 14 Be4, and after 14 ... Rb8 he unexpectedly sacrifices a pawn – 15 a3!? bxa3 16 b4 a5?! (16 ... Bxb4? 17 Bxh7+!) 17 bxa5 Qxa5 18 Bxa3 Bxa3 19 Bxh7+! (the same combination, but in more complicated form) 19 ... Kxh7 20 Ng5+ Kg6 21 Qd3+ f5 (21 ... Kxg5 22 f4+ Kh6 23 Qh3+ Kg6 24 f5+ exf5 25 Rf3 f6 26 Rf5! Rh8 27 Qg4+ Kf7 28 e6+, winning the queen) 22 Nxe6 with crushing threats (Kasimdzhanov-Lesiege, Istanbul Olympiad 2000), although 16 ... f5 is sounder (Khalifman-Bareev, Dortmund 2000). But these are nuances from the turn of the 20th-21st centuries ...

13 ... h6



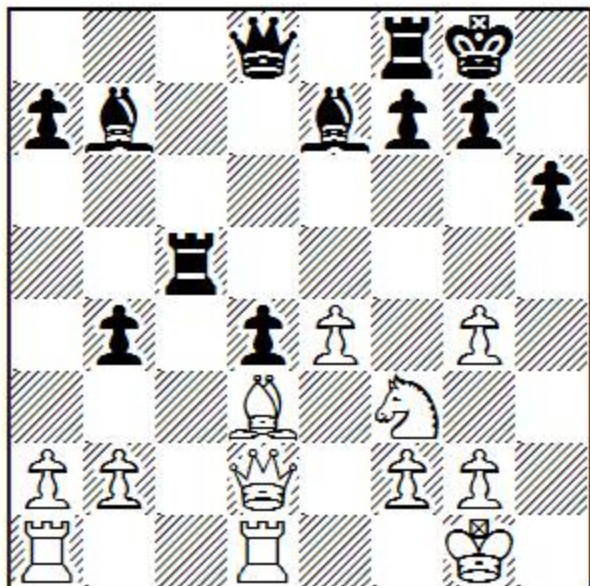
14 Be3

A novelty which, however, does not cause Black any particular problems. 14 e5 Nd7 would have led to a position from the 3rd game. It is no better to play 14 Rd1 Rc8 (G.Kuzmin-Bagirov, Lvov Zonal 1978), or 14 a3 c5! (Illescas-Anand, Madrid 1993).

14 ... R**c**8 15 R**f**d1 (later they tried 15 N**d**2, 15 a**3** and 15 R**a**c1(d1), but in each case Black had no reason to complain about the opening) 15 ... c**5**!

A typical undermining of the centre that frees Black's game.

16 d**x**c5 N**g**4 17 B**d**4 e**5** 18 h**3** (already the only move; both 18 B**x**e5? R**x**c5 and 18 a**3**?! b**x**a3 19 R**x**a3 e**x**d4 or 19 Q**b**3 R**b**8! are bad for White) 18 ... e**x**d4 19 h**x**g4 R**x**c5 20 Q**d**2



20 ... a**5**?!

Too slow. 20..B**c**8! (immediately latching on to the g4-pawn) was more forceful, after which Keene gave 21 Q**f**4 in *Informator*. But this is a dubious recommendation, since after 21 ... Q**d**7! it is not easy, if at all possible, for White to find a clear-cut way to equalise.

21 R**a**c1 (now the position is roughly equal) 21 ... Q**d**7?

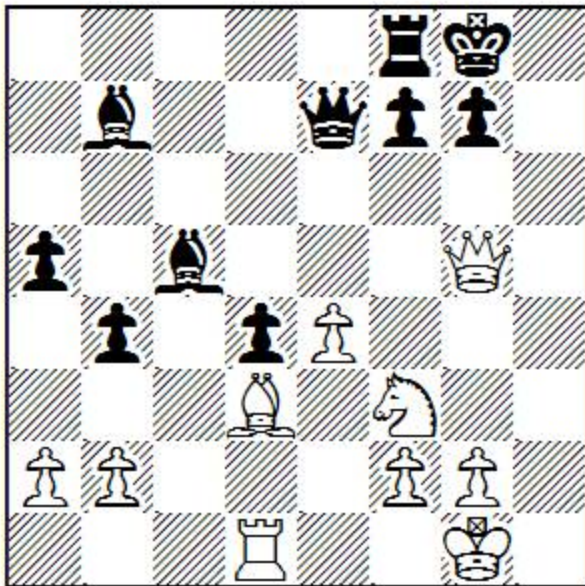
But this is a serious mistake: such a 'gain of tempo' by the attack on the g4-pawn, involving the conceding of the c-file, merely plays into White's hands. 21 ... R**x**c1 22 R**x**c1 Q**d**7 23 Q**f**4 R**c**8 was better, with equality (Graf-Novikov, 58th USSR Championship, Moscow 1991) or the unclear 21 ... R**e**8!?

22 R**x**c5 B**x**c5 23 g**5**! (the weak g-pawn suddenly performs the role of a battering-ram: after its exchange for the h-pawn, the black king will feel uncomfortable) 23 ... h**x**g5

23 ... h5?! 24 g6! fxc6 25 Qg5 or 23 ... Qe6 24 Rc1! Bb6 25 Qf4 also leaves White with a dangerous initiative, while after 23 ... Qg4 24 gxh6 Re8 25 hxg7 Kxg7 26 Rc1 Bb6 27 Nh2 Black has no compensation for the pawn.

24 Qxg5 Qe7

If 24 ... Bb6, then 25 Ne5 is unpleasant. Polugayevsky apparently thought that he would be able to parry White's threats on the h-file without much difficulty, but it all turns out far worse for him.



25 Qh5!

Of course, Korchnoi did not even think of exchanging queens – 25 Qxe7 Bxe7 26 Rc1 in pursuit of the d4-pawn, since after 26 ... Rc8 27 Rxc8+ Bxc8 28 Nxd4 Bf6 29 Nc6 Bd7 30 Nxa5 Bxb2 Black's two bishops compensate for the pawn.

25 ... g6

Allowing the white queen to go to h6, after which Black's position is probably no longer defensible. But 25 ... Qd6 would also not have solved his problems after 26 Re1!, for example: 26 ... Bb6 (26 ... a4 27 Rc1! Bb6 28 Rc4) 27 e5 Qh6 28 Qxh6 gxh6 29 e6, or 26 ... Qb6 27 b3 Be7 28 Bc4 with a powerful initiative.

26 Qh6 (as often happens, direct threats prove pretty effective) **26 ... Qf6**

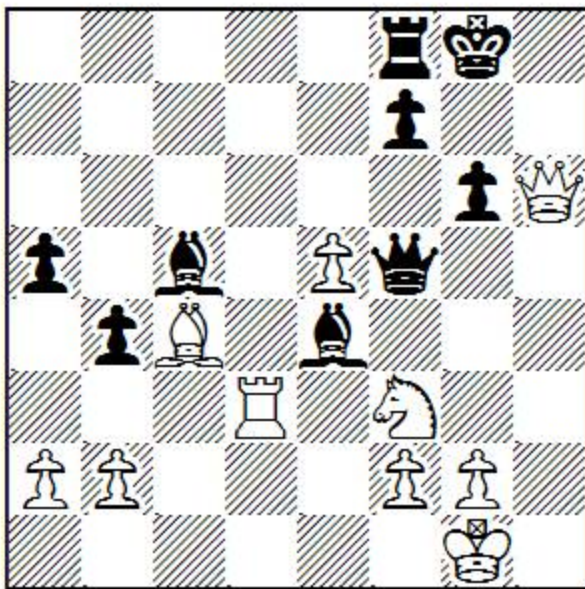
Black also faced difficulties after 26 ... Re8 27 Ng5 Qf6 28 Bc4! (achieving the ideal coordination of the pieces) 28 ... Re7 – here 29 Rd3! Bxe4 (29 ... Qg7 30 Qh4) 30 Bxf7+ Qxf7 31 Nxf7 Bxd3 32 Qg5 is good, as is 29 e5! Qg7 30 Qh2! (threatening 31 e6) 30 ... Qxe5 31 Bxf7+ Kf8 32 Qh6+ Qg7 33 Qh4 with a very strong attack (33 ... Qe5 34 Bxg6).

27 Bc4! d3 (27 ... Bxe4? 28 Ng5; 27 ... Re8 28 Ng5 Re7 – cf. 26 ... Re8) 28 e5 Qf5

28 ... Qg7 is no better: 29 Qg5! Bxf3 30 gxf3 Bd4 31 f4 Bxb2 32 Rxd3 (Keene) 32 ... Rc8 33 e6! Bf6 34 exf7+ Kf8 35 Qxa5 or 35 Qb5 and wins.

29 Rxd3 Be4

In time-trouble Polugayevsky considered this position still not altogether clear, but now comes a highly spectacular finish.



30 Rd6! (a brilliant move: Rf6 is threatened) 30 ... Qg4

The rook is taboo – 30 ... Bxd6 31 Ng5, while if 30 ... Qh5, then 31 Qxh5 gxh5 32 Rd7 Bxf3 33 gxf3 Kg7 34 f4 Kg6 35 Bd3+ Kh6 36 Kg2 etc.

31 Rf6 Bf5 32 b3

Supporting the bishop at c4 and retaining decisive threats. Black's further resistance in time-trouble proves futile.

32 ... Bd4 33 Nxd4

The simplest, although it was also possible to win by 33 Rd6 Bc5 34 Ng5 Qh5 35 Bxf7+ Rxf7 36 Qxh5 gxh5 37 Nxf7 Bxd6 38 Nxd6 Bb1 39 Nb7.

33 ... Qxd4 34 Rxg6+! Bxg6 35 Qxg6+ Kh8 36 Qh6+ Kg8 37 e6 (transposing into a won endgame with two extra pawns) 37 ... Qe4 38 exf7+ Rxf7 39 Qf6 Qb1+ 40 Kh2 Qh7+ 41 Kg3 Qd3+ 42 f3 Qxc4 43 Qd8+ 1-0

The score became 6-1 in Korchnoi's favour – almost like Fischer! But since they were due to play up to 16 games, the match continued. To Polugayevsky's credit, even with such a nightmarish score he did not lose heart and continued to fight: he won the 8th game and subsequently gained promising positions several times. But, as Bagirov sorrowfully explained, 'all the time he was lacking something: Korchnoi was as though bewitched!' And in the end he won $8\frac{1}{2}$ - $4\frac{1}{2}$ (+5-1=7).

This rout was also, of course, the result of Polugayevsky's psychological instability: he always found it difficult playing against Korchnoi. In many stages of the game he played very, very well, but at decisive moments he was not quite able to withstand the tension. And this 'not quite' was enough for Korchnoi to score an impressive victory! Most striking were his brilliant form and the sharp leap in his creative potential, incredible for a 45-year-old player. He himself was brief in his assessment of what happened: 'I was much stronger at the chessboard, my nerves again proved more robust, and the assistance of my seconds was more effective' (here he was talking about Raymond Keene, Michael Stean and Yakov Murey).

This match must have served as a warning signal to Karpov and his trainers: Korchnoi had never played with such energy, drive and invention! What was striking was the diversity of the creative methods he employed. But at the same time Korchnoi's propensity for complicated, non-standard endings revealed itself. His virtuoso handling of them enabled him to cope confidently with such an expert on opening theory and master of complicated play as Polugayevsky. It was also in endings that Korchnoi was able to set Karpov very serious problems at the finish of the marathon in Baguio ...

Belgrade Revenge

A particular edge to the final Candidates match with Boris Spassky (Belgrade, winter 1977/78) was imparted by the fact that in the mid-1970s the ex-world champion had also been out of favour with the authorities. But then, in the words of Korchnoi, he achieved the

seemingly impossible: 'Virtually the only one out of our millions of emigrants, he obtained dual citizenship and, while retaining his Soviet passport, he resettled in Paris! For several years Spassky fought for his political independence, but "by chance" he received permission to leave exactly a month after my flight from the USSR.'

Therefore in the eyes of the state officials, in contrast to the 'renegade' Korchnoi, Spassky remained a 'representative of the Soviet Chess School'. And they helped the newly-fledged Parisian, trying to protect Karpov against a new meeting with Korchnoi, and themselves against the threat of the Soviet Union again losing the chess crown. The play of the 'traitor' in the match with Polugayevsky caused some alarm. Although at that moment Karpov's dominating position appeared unshakable, Korchnoi's rise was just too rapid and unexpected. Suppose that within a year he were to improve still further and be able to fight with Karpov on equal terms? After all, at the finish of their 1974 match, despite his initial playing advantage, Karpov had found it hard to dispose of his persistent opponent. And now, when the latter had escaped from the grip of the Sports Committee and had assembled quite a good team of trainers, it was possible that things would be even more difficult ...

I don't know to what extent all these off-the-board machinations affected Spassky's play, but the fact remains: despite the help of his long-standing trainer Igor Bondarevsky, the start of this exhausting match (the best of 20 games) was catastrophic for the ex-world champion. In the 1st game he was saved literally by a miracle: in his time-trouble haste Korchnoi 'just in case' made his 41st move – the only one that threw away the win!

But in the 2nd game no miracle occurred. Korchnoi chose a risky variation of his favourite French Defence – as it transpired, he was ready to play this not only against opponents inferior to him in class, but also at the very highest level. And Spassky failed to cope with the resulting complicated problems.

Game 27

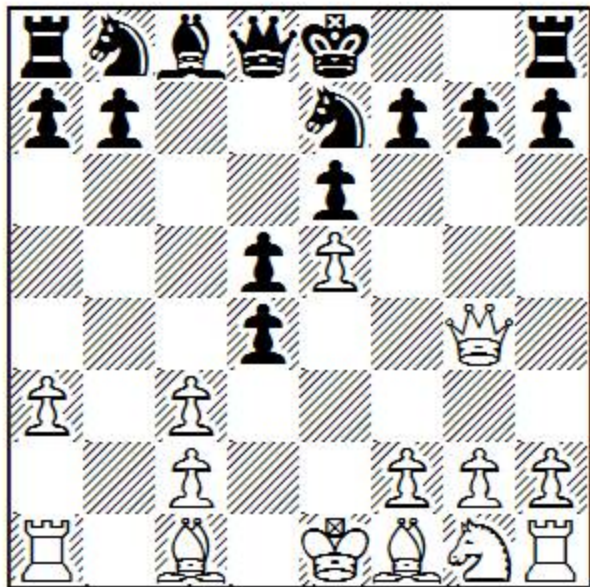
B.Spassky-V.Korchnoi

Candidates Final Match, Belgrade 1977, 2nd game

French Defence C18

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 Nc3 Bb4 4 e5 c5 5 a3 Bxc3+ 6 bxc3 Ne7 7 Qg4 (7 a4 – *Game Nos. 12, 22 and 23*) 7 ... cxd4

7 ... Qc7 (later Korchnoi preferred 7 ... 0-0!) 8 Qxg7 Rg8 9 Qxh7 cxd4 transposes, but here Black has to reckon with 8 Bd2 (as played by Velimirovic) or Geller's old gambit idea 8 Bd3!? cxd4 9 Ne2.



8 Qxg7

Now if 8 Bd3 there is 8 ... Qa5! 9 Ne2 Ng6 (Tal-Bronstein, 32nd USSR Championship, Kiev 1964/65). On the other hand, 8 cxd4 Qc7 9 Kd1 is possible – the 12th game continued 9 ... 0-0 (9 ... Nf5 10 Nf3 Nc6 11 Bd3 Nce7 12 Bd2 Bd7 13 a4! and Ra3, Spassky-Lutikov, Moscow 1960) 10 Nf3 f6 11 Bd3 Nf5 12 Qh3 Nc6 13 g4 fxe5 14 dxe5 Nxe5! with sharp, roughly equal play.

8 ... Rg8 9 Qxh7 Qc7

After the experimental 9 ... Qa5?! there could have followed 10 Ne2 (Timman-Korchnoi, 5th matchgame, Leeuwarden 1976), or 10 Rb1 Nbc6 (Black fails to equalise with 10 ... Qxc3+ 11 Bd2 Qxa3 12 Nf3!, or 11 ... Qc7 12 f4 Nbc6 13 Nf3 Bd7 14 Ng5! Alexander-Botvinnik, England-USSR match 1946) 11 Nf3 Bd7 12 Rxb7 Qxc3+ 13 Kd1 Na5 14 Rb4! ... 1-0 (Short-Timman, Amsterdam 1988).

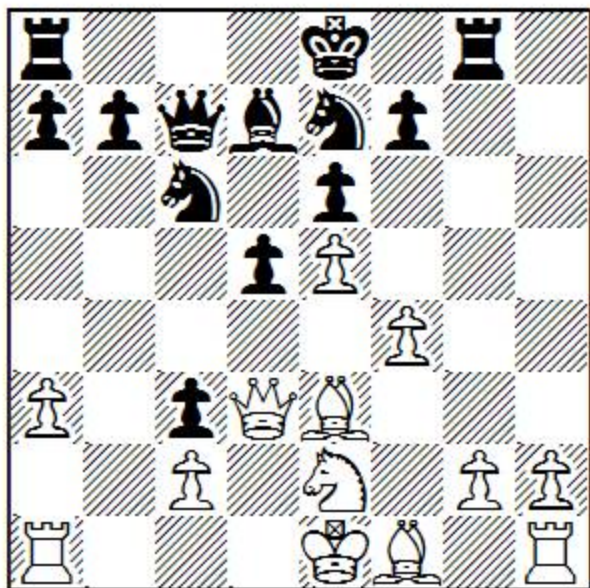
10 Ne2 (10 Kd1 – *Game No. 14*) 10 ... Nbc6 11 f4 Bd7

At that time this move was made automatically, but later, not without the influence of the present game, they also began playing 11 ... dxc3!?

12 Qd3 d4 13 Nxd4 Nxd4 14 Qxd4 Bd7, although after 15 Rg1! Nf5 16 Qf2 White retains a definite advantage.

12 Qd3 dxc3 (the main *tabiya* of the variation) 13 Be3

A rare and unpromising reply: White does better first to eliminate the c3-pawn. In those years they mainly played 13 Nxc3 a6 14 Rb1 Rc8 (or 14 ... Na5, but not 14 ... 0-0-0? 15 Qxa6!) 15 h4! (15 Bd2 Na5! Lilienthal-Levenfish, Moscow 1936) 15 ... Nf5 (15 ... Na7?! 16 Rh3 Nb5 17 Rb3 Nf5 18 h5!) 16 Rh3 Nce7 17 Bd2 with advantage (Korchnoi-Nogueiras, Brussels 1988). But 13 ... Nf5!? 14 Nb5 Qd8 is more accurate, and so nowadays the most unpleasant move for Black is deemed to be 13 Qxc3!



13 ... d4!?

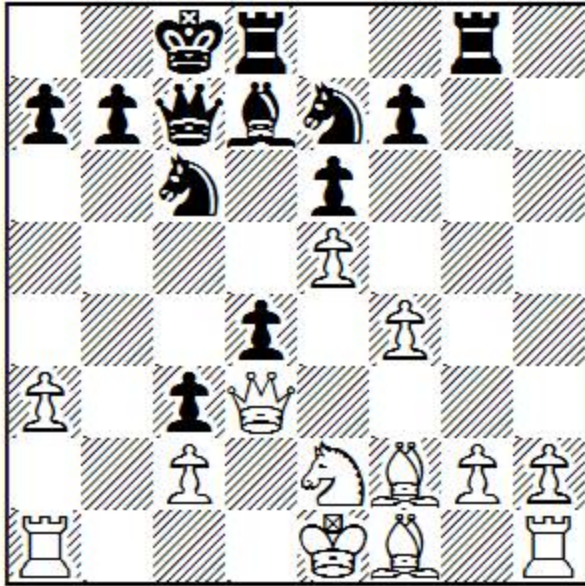
Again a novelty; moreover, this pawn sacrifice has become a typical one! Apart from Uhlmann's old move 13 ... Nf5, 13 ... 0-0-0 is also in common use, and after 14 Bf2 (14 g3 d4!) 14 ... d4 it leads to a position from the game.

14 Bf2

This appears to lose a tempo, but Spassky wants to capture on d4 only after Black has castled queenside, in order to attack the a7-pawn. In the event of 14 Nxd4 Nxd4 Black also has active counterplay: 15 Bxd4 Nd5 16 g3 Bc6 17 Rg1 (17 Be2 Nxf4!) 17 ... 0-0-0, or 15 Qxd4

Nf5 16 Qc5 Qc6! 17 0-0-0 (17 Rd1? Qe4!) 17 ... Qb6! 18 Qxb6 axb6 19 Bxb6 Rxa3 20 Kb1 Ra4 with an excellent endgame.

14 ... 0-0-0

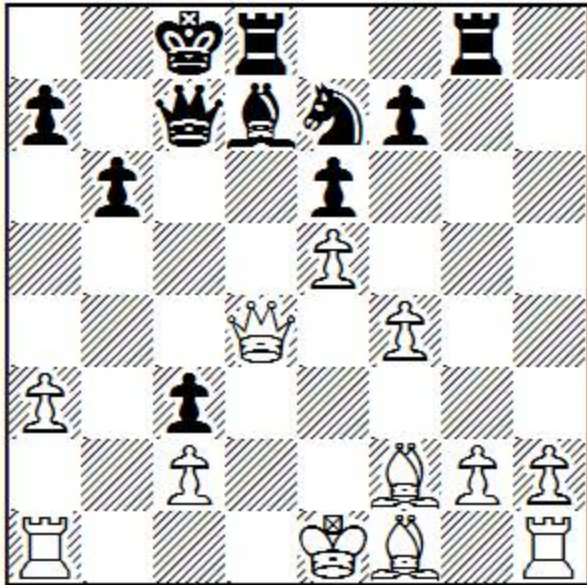


15 Nxd4

Later 15 g3 occurred many times, but here, apart from the sound 15 ... Nf5 16 Bg2 Nce7 (Bronstein-Schmidt, Copenhagen 1991) or 15 ... Ng6 16 Qc4 (16 Bg2 Ncxe5!) 16 ... f6! (Rytshagov-Djurhuus, Asker 1997) Black can play the 'Tal-style' 15 ... Nxe5!? 16 fxe5 Bc6 17 Rg1 Rg4!, also picking up the e5-pawn and obtaining serious compensation for the piece.

15 ... Nxd4 16 Qxd4 b6

As is usual in this variation, a highly non-standard situation has arisen. The fact that it is good for Black is indicated even by the sharp variation 16 ... Bc6!? 17 Qxa7 Rd2 18 Bb6 Qb8 (Keene) 19 Qa5 Rxc2 20 Bc5 Nd5 21 Bd6 b6 22 Qa6+ Qb7 23 Qd3 Rd2 etc. However, Korchnoi does not see the sense in immediately launching into unclear complications, and he retains enduring positional compensation for the pawn, thanks to the chronic weakness of the white king.



17 Bh4 (if 17 Qd3 Bc6 18 Qxc3, then 18 ... Nd5 or 18 ... Rg4) 17 ... Bb5
18 Qe4 Bxf1

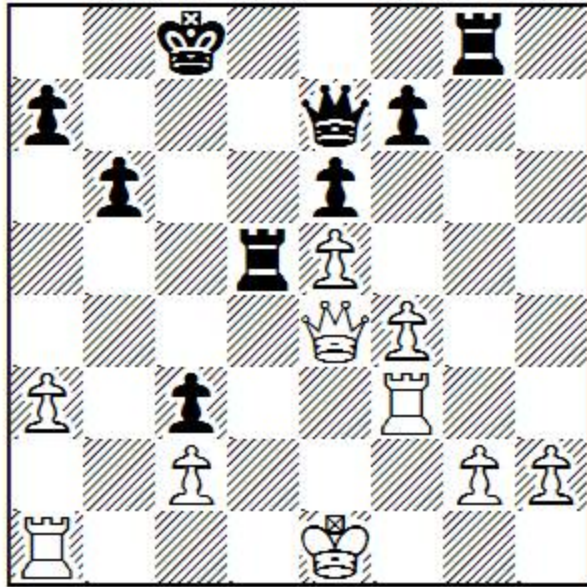
18 ... Bc6 came into consideration, and if 19 Qc4 Kb7 20 Qxc3, then 20 ... Rg4! with the initiative.

19 Rxf1

Keene condemned this move and recommended 19 Qa8+ Kd7! 20 0-0-0+ Nd5 21 Rxd5+ exd5 22 Qxd5+ Kc8 23 Qa8+ with perpetual check. But after 20 ... Ke8! 21 Rxd8+ Qxd8 22 Qxd8+ Kxd8 23 Rxf1 Rxc2 24 Rh1 Ke8 25 Bxe7 (otherwise Nf5!) 25 ... Kxe7 26 h4 Kf8 a rook endgame is reached, where White faces a depressing struggle for a draw in view of his numerous pawn weaknesses. 20 Rd1+! is more accurate, and since 20 ... Ke8? 21 Rxd8+ Qxd8 22 Qxd8+ Kxd8 23 Kxf1 is now in favour of White, there only remains 20 ... Nd5 21 Rxd5+ with the same perpetual check.

However, the move in the game also does not deserve to be criticised: for the moment White maintains the balance and, moreover, he hopes gradually to repel the attack, hide his king behind his kingside pawns and then, in the endgame, advance his passed h-pawn with decisive effect. But, as was said long ago by Tarrasch, before the endgame the gods have created the middlegame! And Korchnoi correctly judged that, with the queens on, Black's threats to the king are quite serious.

19 ... Rd5! 20 Bxe7 (20 Bf6? Qc6! 21 Qf3 Nf5) 20 ... Qxe7 21 Rf3



21 ... Kb8!

'Inviting White to treat himself to another pawn,' writes grandmaster Alexei Kuzmin. 'Heavy piece endings are sometimes called the fourth stage of the chess game: this is a tribute to the great number of problems that arise in them. We have here a brilliant illustration on the theme of a combined attack in such positions.'

22 Kf1?!

But this is a serious inaccuracy. Of course, 22 Rxc3? would have lost to 22 ... Qh4+, but after 22 g3! it is Black who would have had to seek a worthy reply. Keene recommended 22 ... Rd2 23 Rxc3 Rgd8 with an exclamation mark and a '=' evaluation. But after 24 h4 White has a clear advantage (24 ... Rh2?! 25 Rd1!). In my opinion, it is better to play 22 ... Qc5! 23 Qe3 (23 Kf1? Rd2) 23 ... Rd4 24 Qxc3 Rc4 25 Qe3 Qc6 with a guaranteed draw: 26 Qd3 Rd4! 27 Qxd4 Qxf3 28 Rd1 Qh1+ 29 Kd2 Qxh2+ 30 Kc1 Qxg3 etc.

22 ... Rd2!

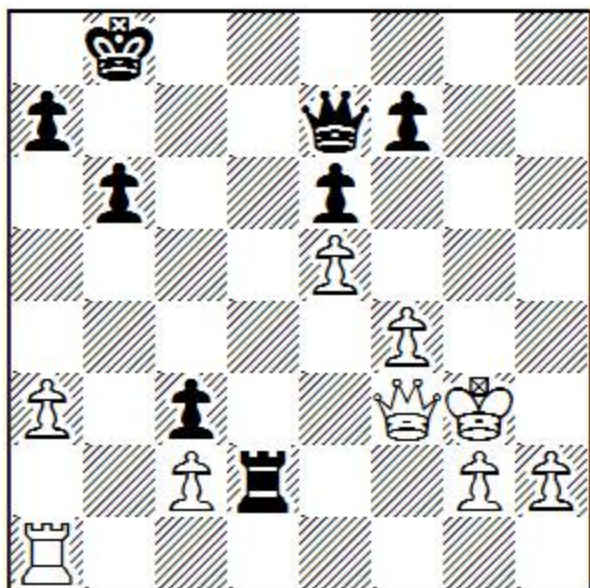
Now this invasion, creating threats both to the king, and to the c2-pawn, forces the exchange of one pair of rooks and enables Black to develop a dangerous initiative.

23 Rf2

After 23 g3? Qc5 (23 ... Rxh2 24 Rxc3 Qd7! 25 Rd3 Qb5 is also possible) 24 Qb4 (not 24 h4? Rxg3) 24 ... Qd5 25 Qd6+ Qxd6 26 exd6 Rxh2 White has a very difficult endgame.

23 ... Rgd8 24 Qf3 (after 24 Rxd2? both 24 ... Rxd2 and 24 ... cxd2 are strong) 24 ... Rxf2+ 25 Kxf2 Rd2+ 26 Kg3

The king has not in fact acquired a quiet shelter: 26 Kf1? is hopeless in view of 26 ... Qc5 27 Rd1 (A.Kuzmin) 27 ... Qc4+ 28 Ke1 Qd4 29 Rxd2 Qxd2+ 30 Kf1 Qxc2.



26 ... Qd8!

An excellent move, forcing the opponent to solve new problems. Perhaps Spassky had been counting on 26 ... Rxc2 27 Rd1! (Keene's recommendation 27 Qd3? is bad on account of 27 ... Rd2 28 Qxc3 Qd8! with the decisive threats of ... Rd3+ and ... Qg8+, for example: 29 Qc6 Qg8+ 30 Kh3 Qh7+ 31 Kg3 Qg6+ 32 Kh3 Rd8! 33 g4 Qh7+ 34 Kg3 Rd3+) 27 ... Qf8 28 Qc6!, and after 28 ... Rd2 (what else?) 29 Rxd2 cxd2 30 Qd7 Qxa3+ 31 Kf2! Qc5+ 32 Ke2 Qc4+ 33 Ke3 White would have parried the attack and gained a draw.

27 Qe4 (the c2-pawn!) 27 ... Qg8+ 28 Kh3 Qh8+ 29 Kg3 Qg7+ 30 Kh3 Rd8 (provoking another weakening) 31 g4

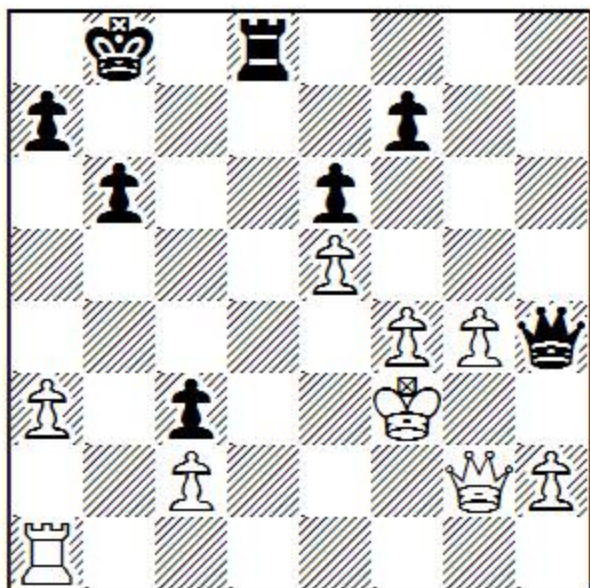
The only move: if 31 g3? Black would have won with the unexpected 31 ... Qh8+ 32 Kg4 Rg8+ 33 Kf3 Qxh2.

31 ... Rh8+ 32 Kg3 Qh6 33 Qg2

The attack along the h-file forces White to move his queen from the centre. For the moment he is unable to consolidate his forces, bring his inactive rook into the game or at least threaten perpetual check with his queen.

33 ... Qh4+ 34 Kf3 Rd8

The culminating point of this very complicated and tense game. The issue is decided in a time scramble, literally within the course of two moves.



35 Qg3?

By urgently activating his rook with 35 Rf1! (A.Kuzmin), White would nevertheless have held the position, for example: 35 ... Rd2 36 Rf2 Qd8 37 Kg3 Rxc2! 38 Rxc2 Qd3+ 39 Kh4 Qh7+ with perpetual check. Nothing better for Black is apparent, and this is not surprising: all the white pieces are in play!

35 ... Qe7?!

An error in reply, which makes the win very difficult. Although, in such a tense situation, with just minutes left on the clock, it was not easy to find the strongest continuation.

Only 35 ... Qh7! would have fully emphasised the drawbacks to 35 Qg3: the c2-pawn is attacked, and after 36 f5 Rd2 so is the h2-pawn. After 37 h4 Black has two strong replies: 37 ... Rxc2 38 Rd1 (38 Ke3 Rd2!) 38 ... Qh6, when with material level he has a powerful attack and

a passed pawn, and the more complicated 37 ... exf5 38 e6+ Kb7 39 e7 fxg4+ 40 Qxg4 f5 41 Qg5 Qf7 42 Kg3 Qe6! (but not 42 ... Re2 43 Rf1! Qd5 44 Rf2), and in view of the exposed position of his king, White probably has no defence.

36 g5?

The fatal mistake. In attempting to create a loophole for his king, Spassky misses the last chance to solve the problem of his rook at a1 – 36 Re1! (Keene) 36 ... Qb7+ 37 Ke3 Rd2 38 Re2 Qd5 39 Qf2. And although after 39 ... Rd1 Black would have retained pressure (the annoying rook cannot be driven away: 40 Re1? Rd4 41 Qf3 Qc5 and wins), White would still have had considerable defensive resources.

36 ... Rd2 (now Black is winning) **37 Kg4 Qb7 38 Qxc3** (eliminating the dangerous pawn, which is unstoppable after 38 Rg1 Qe4 and ... Qxc2) **38 ... Rg2+ 39 Kh3 Rf2! 40 Kg4 Qe4 0-1**

Decisive loss of material is inevitable.

The effect of this win was so strong, that in the next four even-numbered games, where the French Defence was again tested, Spassky avoided 7 Qg4 in favour of the positional variation with 7 Nf3. And only in the 12th game, when his opponent was then leading by a large margin and the fate of the match was almost decided, did he again venture the sharp queen sortie.

Spassky's uncertainty also displayed itself in the 3rd game, where again, as in the 1st and the 5th, there was a discussion in the English Opening with 1 c4 c5 2 Nf3 Nf6 3 Nc3 Nc6 4 d4 cxd4 5 Nxd4 e6 6 g3. In a slightly inferior position, he suddenly captured a 'poisoned' pawn with his queen on the 27th move, allowing a strong counter by his opponent. Black lost material and soon capitulated.

Perturbed by the undesirable development of events, the Sports Committee leaders decided that the root of the problem lay in ... Bondarevsky's lack of knowledge of modern theory. Two of the world champion's agents were present at the match – his chief trainer Semion Furman and the correspondent of *Sovetsky Sport* and 64 Alexander Roshal, who in the autumn of 2005 disclosed to me for the first time what happened during those days in Belgrade:

'Eleven years earlier Furman had undergone a serious operation, and now the after-effects of the terrible illness were returning. Apparently fearful for his health, at some moment he did not want to live in a single room and asked whether I would object if we shared a double room. "Why should there be any problem?" I asked in surprise.

And then, after some hesitation, Semion Abramovich anxiously informed me that the Sports Committee authorities were pressing him to help Spassky. "What can I do? They'll make things very difficult for me if I refuse!"

'Furman very much didn't want to help anyone against Korchnoi, with whom he had worked a great deal in pre-Karpov times (however, Korchnoi still reckons that Furman had been "spying" on him since 1972). And I said to him: "What are you are afraid of? There's Karpov!" But the modest Furman felt shy about phoning him. So then I phoned Karpov: for instructions as to what Furman should say to the authorities. And Semion Abramovich replied to the deputy chairman of the Sports Committee, who had arrived in Belgrade: "Karpov forbids it, because I am his second and if I start helping Spassky, I will reveal Karpov's secrets."

'And Furman was promptly left in peace. But this whole episode cost the impressionable Semion a lot of nerves and several sleepless nights. He became very unwell and I summoned the embassy doctor, who immediately decided: "He should be sent home straight away." And Furman was taken back. Three months later he died ... I am sure that this stress aggravated his illness and hastened his end.'

At the cost of enormous effort Spassky tried to change the match situation, but the next three games – the 4th, 5th and 6th – ended in draws, and the 7th, to his misfortune, became one of the best creative achievements in Korchnoi's career.

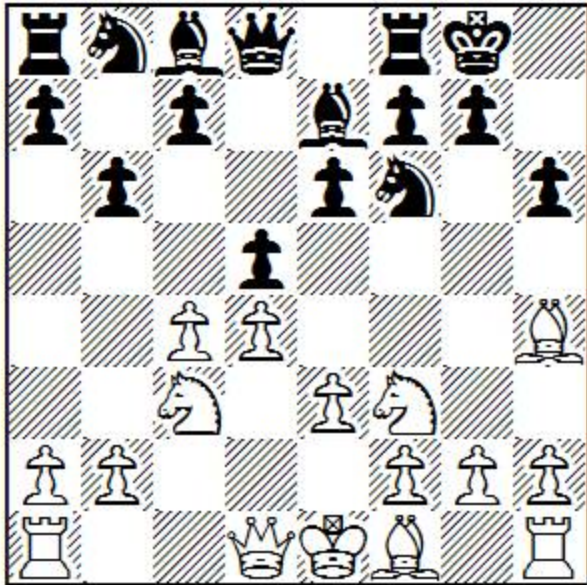
Game 28

V.Korchnoi-B.Spassky

Candidates Final Match, Belgrade 1977, 7th game

Queen's Gambit D58

1 c4 e6 (avoiding 1 ... c5 for the first time in the match) 2 Nc3 d5 3 d4 Be7 4 Nf3 Nf6 5 Bg5 0-0 6 e3 h6 7 Bh4 b6



The reliable Tartakower-Makogonov-Bondarevsky Variation, which featured in the opening repertoire of not only the 10th world champion, but also the 12th and the 13th.

8 Rc1

This waiting move, along with 8 Be2 and 8 Qc2, has replaced the one-time main line 8 cxd5 Nxd5 9 Bxe7 Qxe7 10 Nxd5 exd5 followed by 11 ... Be6! and 12 ... c5 with equality (*Volume 4, Game No.103*).

8 ... Bb7 9 Bxf6 Bxf6 10 cxd5 exd5 11 b4 (an attempt to constrict Black's queenside) 11 ... c6?!

11 ... c5 12 bxc5 bxc5 is more energetic, for example: 13 Qb3 Bc6!, 13 Bb5 Na6!, or 13 dxc5 Nd7 14 Nb5 Rc8! However, Spassky was aiming for ... a7-a5, and if b4-b5, only then ... c6-c5.

12 Be2

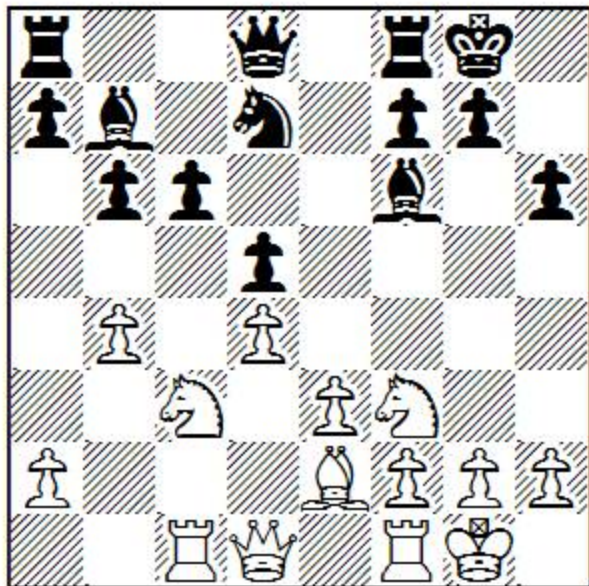
In the 11th game Korchnoi employed an original plan – 12 Bd3! Re8 13 0-0 Nd7 14 Qb3 Nf8 15 Rfd1 Rc8 16 Bb1 Ne6 17 a4 (17 a3!?) 17 ... Ba8 18 Ba2 with the idea of b4-b5 or e3-e4, but subsequently Spassky was able to outplay his opponent and gain the first of his four wins in a desperate match situation (cf. *Volume 3, pp.323-325*).

12 ... Nd7

Soon afterwards 12 ... Qd6 was deemed more accurate, for example: 13 Qb3 Nd7 14 0-0 a5 15 a3 Rfe8 16 Rfd1 Be7 (or immediately 16 ... axb4 17 axb4 b5 and ... Nb6) 17 Rb1 (Browne-Hort,

Reykjavik 1978) 17 ... axb4! 18 axb4 Ra7 and ... Rea8 with a comfortable game for Black.

13 0-0



13 ... a5

'A sharp move. Obviously 13 ... b5 did not appeal to Black because of 14 a4 a6 15 a5 Be7 16 Rb1, and White will soon play his knight from f3 to c5. The quiet continuation 13 ... Re8 14 Qb3 Nf8 also seemed to my opponent to be not altogether satisfactory, in view of 15 b5. If White is allowed to exchange on c6, then the d5-pawn will be weak, while after 15 ... c5 16 dxc5 bxc5 17 Rfd1 Bxc3 18 Qxc3 Ne6 an unclear position arises, with, it would appear, roughly equal chances, but it too did not greatly appeal to Spassky.' (Korchnoi)

14 b5 (14 a3 axb4, and Black has the a-file) 14 ... c5 15 dxc5!

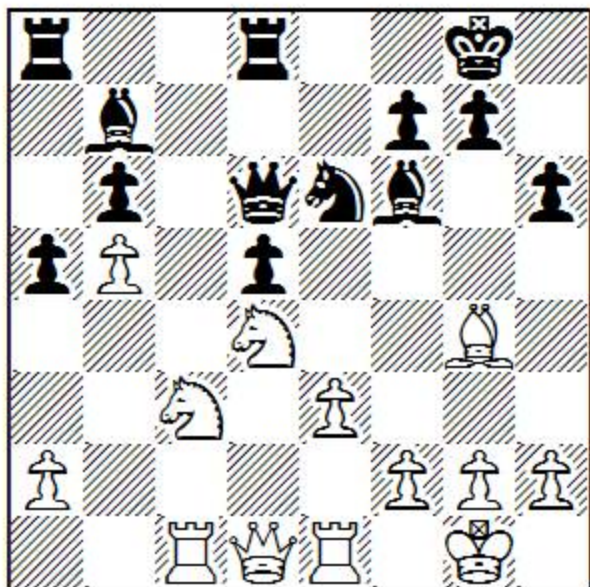
White tries, in a rather unusual way, to exploit the weakness of the c6-square. Stean recommended 15 Re1 c4 16 Nd2 with the idea of Bf3 and Nf1-g3-e2-f4. But Black is not obliged to play ... c5-c4; 15 ... Rc8! is better.

15 ... Nxc5 (the attempt 15 ... Bxc3? 16 Rxc3 bxc5 does not work, since White interposes 16 c6!) 16 Nd4 Qd6 17 Bg4!?

The routine 17 Bf3 Rfd8 and ... Rac8 would have led to a complicated struggle, where Black's two bishops would have compensated for the weakness of the isolated d5-pawn.

17 ... Rfd8 18 Re1 (with the sensible idea of Re2-d2) 18 ... Ne6

An unforced retreat. The simple 18 ... g6 was possible, maintaining the dynamic balance. 'Another way to equalise would have been 18 ... Ne4. However, the move made by Spassky is more active: Black gains control of the strength, the pride of White's position – the d4-square.' (Korchnoi)



19 Bxe6!? (if 19 Nce2, then 19 ... Rac8 is now possible) 19 ... fxe6 20 Nc6!

The crux of White's interesting plan, which harbours numerous dangers for Black: his two bishops soon disappear from the board.

20 ... Bxc6

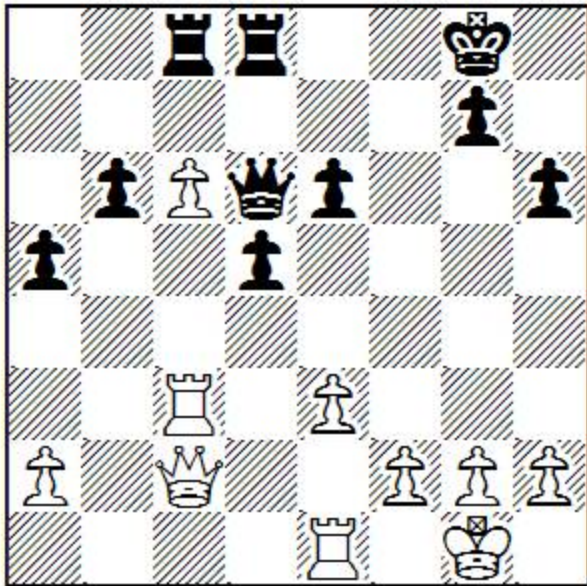
The correct practical decision. After 20 ... Rd7 (20 ... Rdc8? 21 Ne4) Korchnoi was intending 21 Na4 (in *ChessBase*, Donev parries Stean's move 21 e4 by 21 ... Bg5!), but Black could have given up the b6-pawn: 21 ... Rc7! 22 Nxb6 Bxc6 23 bxc6 Ra6 24 Nd7 Raxc6 25 Nxf6+ gxf6 26 Rxc6 Qxc6 with an unclear game (Donev). 26 Rb1! is stronger, with a slight but enduring advantage for White: Black's activity on the c-file is temporary, whereas the weakness of his pawns and the open position of his king are permanent factors! Understandably, Spassky did not want to go in for such a position: all the time he would have had to watch out for various threats.

21 bxc6 Bxc3?!

After 21 ... Qb4?! White would have retained the initiative by 22 a3! Qxa3 23 c7 Rdc8 24 Nb5 (Stein) 24 ... Qb4 25 Rb1 Qe7 26 e4 dxe4 27 Rxe4. However, Black should have immediately extracted the thorn by 21 ... Qxc6 22 Ne4 Qb7! (but not 22 ... Qd7 23 Nxf6+ gxf6 24 Qd4! Kg7 25 Qxb6) 23 Nxf6+ gxf6 24 Qg4+ Kf7, when he gains a draw with accurate play 25 Qh5+ Kg7 or 25 Qf4 e5, and 26 Qxh6? fails to 26 ... Rh8, trapping the queen.

'I had seen all this perfectly well when I made my 19th move,' writes Korchnoi, and he explains his choice by a psychological consideration: he sensed that his opponent would not be satisfied with a draw. Especially since in the variation 25 Qf4 e5 (in my opinion, 25 ... Rac8! 26 Qxh6 Rh8 27 Qf4 Rxc1 28 Rxc1 Rc8 is more solid, with equality) 26 Qf5! Black still has to fight for it: 26 ... Kg7 (26 ... Rg8?! 27 f4! Rae8 28 Rc2 and Rec1) 27 Qg4+ Kh8 (27 ... Kf7 28 f4!) 28 Qe6 Rf8 29 Rc6 Rae8! 30 Rxb6 Rxe6 31 Rxb7 Rc8 etc.

22 Rxc3 Rac8 23 Qc2



Again, as in the 2nd game, a heavy piece ending has been reached, and again a very tense and unusual one! As a counter to the dangerous, far-advanced passed c-pawn, Black intends to create his own passed pawn on the d-file and hopes that in the end it will divert the white pieces from the c-file and lead to the mutual elimination of

these pawns. It is interesting to follow how Korchnoi succeeds in avoiding this apparently obvious and inevitable development of events.

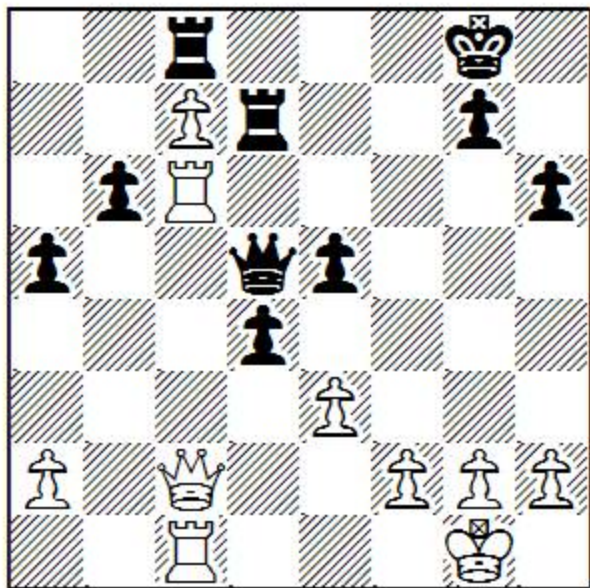
23 ... e5?

Spassky consistently carries out his plan, not seeing any particular danger in the appearance of the white pawn at c7. But he would have done better to blockade it in one of two ways:

1) 23 ... Qc7 24 Qg6 Rd6 25 Rec1 e5 (if 25 ... b5 White has the unpleasant 26 Rc5 b4 27 e4!?) or 24 a4 Rd6 25 Rc1 e5 26 Qd3(b3) and the c6-pawn continues to restrict Black's actions;

2) 23 ... Rc7 (Korchnoi) 24 Rb1 Rb8 25 Rb5 e5 26 Qb3 Rxc6 27 Rxc6 Qxc6 28 Rxd5 Kh8 29 g3 with a slight but enduring advantage for White in view of the chronic weakness of the enemy pawns.

24 c7! Rd7 25 Rc1 d4 26 Rc6 Qd5

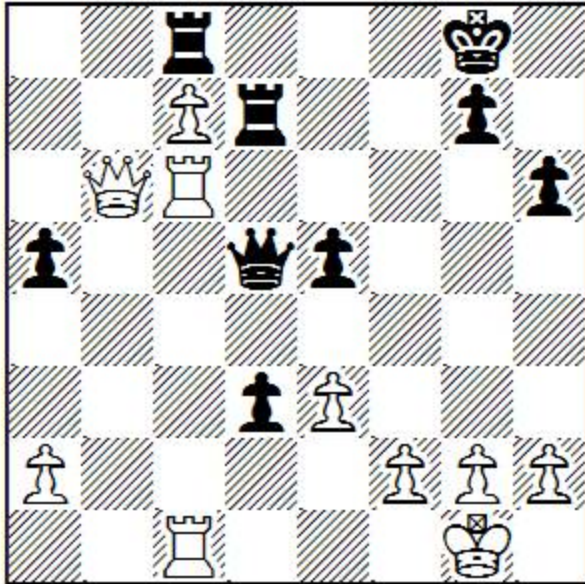


The white passed pawn is already at c7, but Black too does not have far to go: the move ... d4-d3 will be made with gain of tempo. In addition, the white king does not as yet have an escape square, and a further tempo will have to be spent on creating one. On the basis of general considerations, Spassky no doubt thought that he should be able to keep up with his opponent in this race. But Korchnoi's intuitive evaluation proved deeper ...

27 Qb1! (of course, not 27 Rxb6?? Rdx7) **27 ... d3**

'If 27 ... b5, then 28 e4! Qf7 29 Qxb5 and after 27 ... dxe3 28 fxe3 b5 29 Rb6 White is winning, since 29 ... Rdx7 loses to 30 Rxc7 Rxc7 31 Rb8+ and 32 Qf5+.' (Korchnoi)

28 Qxb6



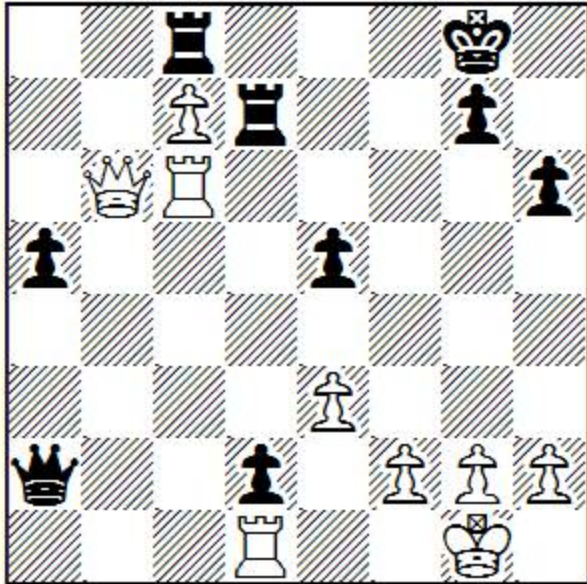
28 ... d2?!

It is hard to refrain from such a move – the pawn approaches the queening square with gain of tempo! But this would appear to be the decisive mistake: Black should not have blocked the 2nd rank. 28 ... Qxa2! was essential, and if 29 Qb7, then 29 ... Rf8 (the threat of ... Qxf2+ enables a highly important tempo to be gained) 30 h3 Qxf2+ 31 Kh2 d2 32 Rd1 Qxe3 33 c8Q Rxb7 34 Qxb7 Qf4+ 35 Kg1 Qe3+ 36 Kh2 Qf4+ with perpetual check (Donev).

True, here too after 29 h3! White would have retained the advantage and chances of success: 29 ... Rf7 30 Qa6 Qxf2+ 31 Kh2 Qf5 (the queen has to return) 32 e4! Qf4+ 33 Kh1 Rff8 (33 ... Rfx7? 34 Qc4+ is bad for Black, as is 33 ... Rxc7? 34 Rxc7 d2 35 R(Q)c8+ etc.) 34 Qxd3 Kh7 35 Qc4, and Black's trump (his d-pawn) has disappeared, whereas White's trump (his c-pawn) has remained. And although, with the queens and four rooks on the board, Black could still have hoped for counterplay involving the advance of the a-pawn, he would have faced a difficult struggle for a draw. We must once again applaud Korchnoi's far-sightedness!

29 Rd1 Qxa2

If 29 ... Qd3 White wins by 30 Qb7 Qe2 (30 ... Rf8 31 c8Q) 31 Qxc8+ Kh7 32 Qh8+! (or 32 h3 Qxd1+ 33 Kh2 Korchnoi) 32 ... Kxh8 33 Rxh6+! gxh6 34 c8Q+ Kg7 35 Qxd7+ and Qxd2.



30 h3!!

A key kink in White's brilliant combination. 'A very important move! Black can no longer speculate on the weakness of White's back rank.' (Korchnoi)

It can be assumed that Spassky mainly considered 30 Qb7?, when it is bad to play 30 ... Qa1? 31 Qxc8+ Kh7 32 Qh8+! Kxh8 33 Rxh6+ gxh6 34 c8Q+ Kg7 35 Qxd7+ with crushing threats, but Black is saved by another version of the rook sacrifice – 30 ... Qa4!! 31 Qxc8+ Kh7 32 h3! (of course, not 32 Qg8+? Kxg8 33 c8Q+ Kh7 34 Rc2 Qa1! and Black wins – Stean) 32 ... Qxc6 (32 ... Qxd1+? 33 Kh2 and wins) 33 Rxd2 Qc1+ 34 Kh2 Qxd2 35 Qb8 Rxc7 36 Qxc7 (Donev) with a drawn queen endgame.

It is easy to check that here White has nothing better. After the move in the game and Black's reply it appears that the position is almost the same, but ... only 'almost'!

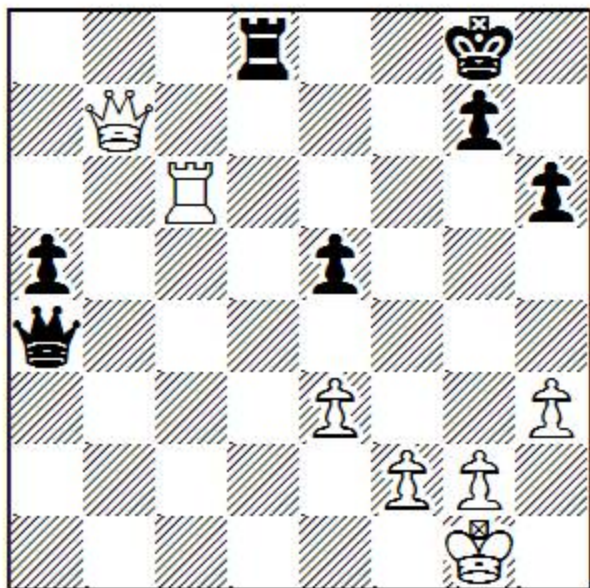
30 ... Qa4 31 Rxd2! Rxd2 32 Qb7!

Another accurate move, which settles everything. Black is forced to bring back his rook and go into a queen and rook ending, where he

inevitably loses material because of the opponent's mating threats.

Stein recommended 32 Qb8 Rxb8 33 cxb8Q+ Kh7 34 Rc8 – to a human, White's threats seem very dangerous, but the machine is not afraid of its king being pursued: 34 ... Qd1+ 35 Kh2 Rxf2 36 Rh8+ Kg6 37 Qe8+ Rf7 38 Qc6+ Kf5. A decisive strengthening of the attack is not immediately apparent, but a careful study reveals that the black king has overstepped the boundary of acceptable risk – after 39 Re8! Rf6 (there is nothing else) 40 Qb7 Qd6 (40 ... Kg6 41 Re7) 41 e4+ Kg6 42 Re7 White nevertheless wins, although not without some adventures: 42 ... Kh5 43 Qc8 g5 44 Rg7 Qe6 45 Qc2.

32 ... Rdd8 33 cxd8Q+ Rxd8



34 Rc7!

'The attack continues!' writes Viktor Lvovich. ' "It would be interesting to know how far ahead Korchnoi calculated the variations!?" Bent Larsen enviously exclaimed-cum-enquired in his comments on this game.' It turns out that Black can defend g7 only by giving up his e-pawn, after which his resistance is largely a formality.

34 ... Qa1+ 35 Kh2 e4 36 Qxe4 Qf6 (36 ... a4 37 Ra7 Qb2 38 f4 or 37 ... a3 38 Qe6+ Kh7 39 Qe7) 37 f4 Qf8 38 Ra7 Qc5

'Black could have offered a more tenacious resistance by 38 ... Re8! 39 Qd4 Qf6, or 39 Qd3 Qc5, or 39 Qf3 Qf5.' (Korchnoi). But 39 Qc6! Kh7 (39 ... Rxe3? 40 Ra8) 40 Qc3 is better, when White wins.

39 Qb7 Qc3 40 Qe7 Rf8 41 e4! Qd4 (41 ... Rxf4? 42 e5) 42 f5 h5 (42 ... Qc3 43 e5, while if 42 ... a4 White was intending 43 Rd7 Qf6 44 Qxf6 Rxf6 45 Ra7 Rb6 46 Rxa4) 43 Rxa5 Qd2 44 Qe5 Qg5 45 Ra6 Rf7 46 Rg6 Qd8 47 f6 h4 48 fxg7 1-0

A classic example of exploiting the power of a passed pawn.

In the next three games there was a no less fervent, fierce and open battle, affording a great deal of pleasure to the numerous Belgrade spectators.

In the 8th game, after errors by his opponent in time-trouble, Spassky seized the initiative in a sharp ending, but during the resumption, already in the second time scramble, he first lost his advantage, then on the 51st move he suddenly gave up a very important pawn, and as a result suffered a fourth defeat. The score became 6-2 in Korchnoi's favour. An enormous advantage, which fairly accurately reflected the relative strengths in the match.

Just imagine: 'plus five' after seven games with Polugayevsky and 'plus four' after eight games with Spassky! The Soviet sports authorities had something to think about: Korchnoi had become extremely dangerous. In the western press they increasingly often began calling him none other than Viktor the Terrible.

In the 9th game, which went 1 c4 e6 2 Nc3 f5 3 Nf3 Nf6 4 b3 b6 5 g3, it was Korchnoi who had the better endgame, and he tormented his opponent for a long time during the resumption, but Spassky nevertheless held out: a draw on the 71st move. But the 10th game turned into another drama for him: after at last gaining a clear advantage against the French Defence, he almost lost in time-trouble, conceded the initiative, and then literally crumbled during the resumption.

Starting with the 11th game, miraculous things began to happen. At a moment when everyone thought that the rout was irreversible, Spassky suddenly gained a new lease of life – and Korchnoi suffered four successive defeats! A unique instance in his battle for the crown (not counting his tournament failure in rounds 14-17 in Curaçao), and in general in the history of matches at that level. His lead was reduced to the minimum: 7½-6½.

Soviet chess fans were perplexed: what was happening with Korchnoi? The papers reported certain conflicts, and a brief comment in *64* read: 'After Spassky had won the 11th, 12th and 13th games, Korchnoi categorically demanded that all the remaining games should

be played in a closed room, without any spectators, or that the match should be moved to another country, threatening in the event of refusal to pull out of the match ... In accordance with the rules, the chief arbiter B.Kazic informed Korchnoi that his demand could not be met. To put pressure on the arbiters and the organisers, Korchnoi made a statement that he was refusing to play and was leaving Belgrade. Then he said that he wanted to call a press conference in Zürich, at which he would report on his further intentions. However, after a few hours Korchnoi announced that he would nevertheless continue the match. The next game, the 14th, took place on 2nd January (since on 30th December play had been postponed because of Korchnoi, this was counted as his second time-out) and ended in a new win for Spassky.'

And it was only years later that Korchnoi revealed in his book *Antichess* what had happened then at the match: 'My helpers and I noticed an increase in the activity of the Soviets. First one, and then another Soviet grandmaster appeared in Belgrade, and Ivonin, the main director of chess and deputy chairman of the USSR Sports Committee, also arrived at the match, and scurrying about in the hall were officials from the Soviet embassy in Belgrade, people with attaché cases – their Soviet origin was unquestionable. Some kind of weapon was being employed against me – this was clear to me, but everything around, including Spassky's behaviour, was mysterious and sombre. During the second half of the match Spassky did not sit at the board on the stage. When he made his way to the board to make a move, he was swaying, with half-closed eyes, like a medium ... '

Which provoked a protest by Korchnoi. It was affecting his nerves – sitting alone at the board, not seeing his opponent, who in addition was playing as though under hypnosis: 'He did not look normal. Although, of course, during matches for the world championship all sorts of devilry takes place ... '

However, Spassky does not see anything reprehensible in this manner of play: 'This idea occurred to me during my match with Fischer. I was oppressed by remaining in public view for a long time, I lost concentration and found it hard to force myself to focus. It was the same in Belgrade.' According to the ex-champion, the first five rows were occupied by 'Korchnoi's people' (*or nevertheless Karpov's?! – G.K.*) and their visual pressure was so strong, that his brain ceased to function during the third hour of play. And Spassky demanded of the

organisers a special box on the stage, where he sat both when it was his opponent to move, and when he was considering his own move.

But it was because of this that he and Korchnoi, as the latter expressed it, 'began the match on amicable terms, but ended it as enemies' (many years later these passions, naturally, died down, although other disagreements arose). There can be no doubt that for the Soviet side the match in Belgrade was a kind of testing ground before the main battle with the disagreeable challenger: they studied his habits and his reactions to external irritants – this know-how later came in useful in Baguio ...

Fortunately for him and 'to the surprise of many', Korchnoi managed to withstand these terrible blows, endure the psychological stress and 'escape from my fatal dive'.

He made a couple of draws, and then in a very tense struggle won the 17th and 18th games and worthily concluded this 'strange' match: $10\frac{1}{2}-7\frac{1}{2}$ (+7-4=7). What resulted was a symbiosis of Korchnoi's two preceding match battles: both a fierce battle of nerves (as with Petrosian) and a demonstration of his wealth of ideas and eagerness for a struggle (as with Polugayevsky).

Thus, more than nine years later Korchnoi gained a convincing revenge against Spassky for his defeat in the final Candidates match of 1968. It is curious that in this same series, only at the quarter-final stage, Portisch also gained revenge on Larsen for 1968 (true, in the semi-final he nevertheless lost to Spassky). The reasons for these revenges, albeit with a certain delay, are fully comparable: both Spassky and Larsen had already passed the peaks of their careers, whereas their opponents, thanks to enormous research work, were still continuing to improve.

Whereas in 1968 Spassky was very much on the rise, he skilfully posed the most unpleasant problems and Korchnoi was unable to withstand the tension created by his opponent, in 1977 the roles were reversed. Certainly, the ex-world champion still retained enormous practical strength, but this was not sufficient to halt Korchnoi, sharply improving in all aspects of the game, who happily went in for any complications, and was ready to play the middlegame, and the endgame, and better and even inferior positions.

And so, the 1977 Candidates series concluded in a triumph for the defector. Korchnoi earned the right to play a second match with Karpov, this time outside the USSR.

Baguio through the Eyes of Korchnoi

After Fischer's departure it appeared unlikely that anyone would successfully be able to oppose Karpov in the next match for the world championship: the young champion was improving literally tournament by tournament. And after all, it is only matches between equal opponents, when there is a fierce clash of different conceptions and styles, that draw widespread attention and become landmarks in the development of the game. Fortunately for chess, one of the grandmasters of the older generation – Korchnoi – was able to raise his creative potential and prepare many interesting ideas for his duel with Karpov, and above all – retain his freshness of thinking and fighting spirit.

Therefore the match in the Filipino resort of Baguio (July-October 1978), which the general public mainly remembers, alas, for its political intrigue and constant sequence of scandals, was hugely successful from the standpoint of chess skill. And I should like to talk about it twice (as in Volume 1 with the Capablanca-Alekhine match): first from the viewpoint of the loser, and then in the eyes of the winner. The main emphasis will be placed on an analysis of the chess content, and of the numerous off-the-board events, which were widely covered in the press, I will only single out those which, in my view, had a significant influence on the competitive course of the match.

For this and the next two matches for the world crown, regulations, which were shackling for the challenger – play to six wins without counting draws, and a return match in the event of the champion losing – had been adopted with the participation of Karpov at a meeting of the FIDE Central Committee in Caracas (October 1977). 'Supposedly under pressure, the Soviets agreed that the match for the world championship would be not of 24 games (as previously), but unlimited. But in return they secured for themselves all the remaining privileges!' writes Korchnoi. His indignation is understandable: return matches had been abolished back in the early 1960s, and besides, to play an unlimited match and, in the event of winning, an unlimited return match, was in fact an incredible burden for the challenger, who had already gone through a difficult qualification process.

Also unusual was the choice of venue. Baguio is 250 kilometres from the Filipino capital Manila at a height of 1500 metres above sea level, At times the town disappeared in a thick mist: the match was held

in the season of rain, typhoons and storms. Landslides also occurred, and interruptions with the electricity supply ... And yet FIDE had also received offers from European towns! Why was it that Baguio became the venue for a world championship match? The reply to this question must be sought from its organiser – the extremely energetic and endlessly cunning Florencio Campomanes, who had dreamed of staging the Fischer-Karpov match and was an intermediary in their negotiations (cf. the chapter ‘Abdication’ in Volume 4). In Baguio he curried favour with the Soviet officials and Karpov, assisting the champion in every way, although, as the match organiser, he should have remained neutral. Four years later, as a reward, Campo was to receive the decisive votes of the Soviet Bloc countries in the elections for the FIDE President ...

For a proper understanding of the pre-match situation, it must be remembered that Korchnoi’s wife and son were still in the USSR, having been denied an exit visa (later his son was even arrested and imprisoned for two and a half years ‘for avoiding army service’). In the spring of 1978 he had appealed to the FIDE President Max Euwe, asking him to help his family to leave, in order to ‘secure equal conditions in the match with Karpov’. But here FIDE was powerless.

Korchnoi: ‘The members of my family became hostages, who had to pay for my escape.’ Before flying to the match he made one more attempt – he published an open letter to Brezhnev with a request that he should ‘display goodwill’ and allow his family to leave the USSR. In Manila he handed the letter to the Soviet embassy and again read out its text at a press conference. But this was a voice crying in the wilderness: Korchnoi’s family was released only after the match in Merano, in the summer of 1982.

The challenger’s staff consisted of five persons, and the champion’s fourteen. ‘I was psychologically prepared for a harsh struggle, but nevertheless the arrival of such a huge detachment plunged me into depression,’ Korchnoi admitted. Although, the number of purely chess helpers was equal: Korchnoi had Keene, Stean and Murey, whereas Karpov had Balashov, Zaitsev and Tal (only from the 29th game were they joined by Vasyukov). Looking ahead, I should mention that the challenger’s team was inferior to the Soviet team in rating, experience and knowledge, but, thanks to Korchnoi’s incredible energy and his ability to work for many hours at a stretch, it maintained a definite parity in the analysis of adjourned positions (with the exception, perhaps, of a

couple of instances), and at the finish of the marathon it was altogether equal to the occasion.

On the opening day of the match, 12th July, the head of the Soviet delegation, Colonel Viktor Baturinsky, 'on the instructions of the champion', publicly stated that Karpov was agreeable to shaking hands before a game (this point in the rules, suggested by Korchnoi, also contained this condition: 'if one of the contestants no longer intends to do this, he must inform the arbiter beforehand') and that he did not object to his opponent using a special chair, but he demanded that it be checked ... by X-ray. Which was in fact done – exactly as with Fischer's chair at the match in Reykjavik (cf. the chapter 'Battle of the Gods' in Volume 4).

At the first meeting of the appeal jury the question was discussed as to whether Korchnoi had the right to play under the Swiss flag. The leader of his delegation, Petra Leeuwerik (later Korchnoi's wife; at the end of the Second World War she had been arrested by Soviet security officials in Vienna and had spent ten years in Stalin's camps), presented a written authorisation by the Swiss Chess Federation, but Baturinsky insisted that the challenger could only play under a flag with the inscription 'stateless'. And he got his way! True, after a protest by Korchnoi a compromise was found: large flags of FIDE, the Philippines and the USSR were arranged on the stage, but on the playing table there were no flags at all. And yet Korchnoi is correct, when he writes: 'Henceforth, I was deprived not only of a flag, but of legal parity as well.'

The challenger decided to play wearing mirrored glasses, and not at all because of the bright southern sun. 'The aim was simple: to deprive Karpov of his favourite occupation – standing at the board, staring straight at his opponent. While I was wearing these glasses, all he could admire was his own reflection.'

The first four games of the match ended in draws, although in the 3rd game Korchnoi had a dangerous attack, but he did not find the strongest continuation and lost his advantage. But in the middle of the 2nd game another reason for conflict occurred: Karpov's helpers handed him a drink, which resembled a fruit yoghurt. Korchnoi made a protest: by the FIDE rules any contact between a player and the auditorium was forbidden. Baturinsky made an ironic reply, and on the instigation of the champion's press attaché Alexander Roshal the Soviets christened this protest 'a storm in a yoghurt cup'. But to avoid

any suggestion of prompting, the chief arbiter Lothar Schmid requested that the drink should be handed to Karpov at one and the same time.

This strange 'yoghurt', which, according to Karpov, could have one of two shades, 'depending on the amount of acidity in the glass', also disturbed Korchnoi: 'It was interesting to observe how they surreptitiously carried the drink around for a couple of hours, and then gave it to Karpov, who leaped up from his seat and demolished it. I noticed that after his "yoghurt", Karpov would often start playing with the speed of a machine-gun! It wouldn't have been a bad thing to take away this "yoghurt" for chemical analysis ...' Well, when one of the participants in a world championship match is deprived of equal rights and is under constant pressure, any deviation from the norm can unsettle him and begin to seem dangerous and suspicious. Later, as we will see, psychological attacks on the part of the Soviet team were highly effective.

From the 4th game onwards, when Dr Euwe was no longer in Baguio (the FIDE representative left at the match was Campomanes!), a place not far from the stage was occupied by a 'strange creature' – the subsequently famous Dr Zukhar. 'He stared hard at me, trying to attract my attention,' writes Korchnoi. 'His connection with Karpov was indisputable. He sat without moving for the entire five hours – even a robot would have envied his powers of concentration! – but whenever it was Karpov's turn to move, he simply froze. You could actually feel the colossal thought-work going on inside this man!' Korchnoi demanded that he should be moved, Baturinsky refused, and from then on the battle 'for' and 'against' Zukhar became the main off-the-board intrigue of the match.

In the meantime the 5th game took place. This was undoubtedly the most interesting of those played at the start and is important for understanding the logic of matchplay.

Game 29

V.Korchnoi-A.Karpov

World Championship Match, Baguio 1978, 5th game

Nimzo-Indian Defence E42

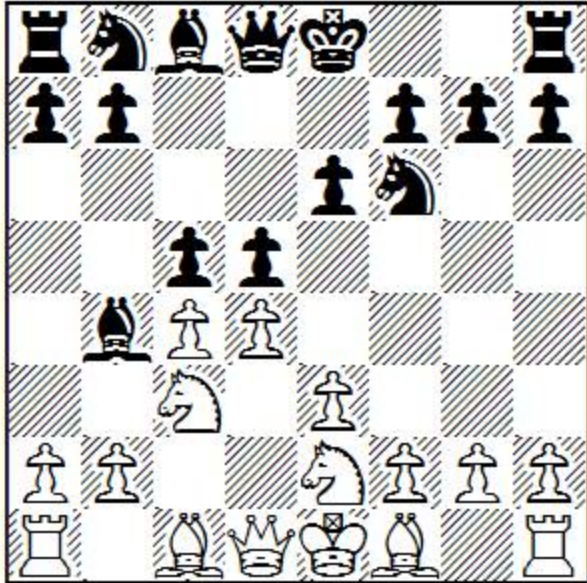
1 c4 Nf6 2 d4 e6 3 Nc3 Bb4 4 e3 c5 (in the 7th and 17th games 4 ... 0-0 5 Bd3 occurred – *Game No.76*) 5 Ne2!?

The old Rubinstein Variation, revived at that time by Korchnoi, who demonstrated the dangers awaiting Black. It is because of the reply 5 Ne2 that 4 ... c5 has practically gone out of use nowadays.

5 ... d5

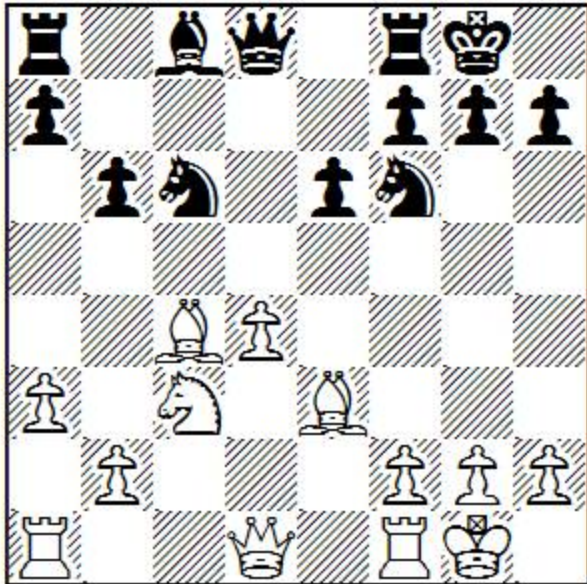
The 3rd game went 5 ... cxd4 6 exd4 d5 (6 ... Ne4 7 a3! Korchnoi-Timman, Las Palmas 1981) 7 c5 Ne4 8 Bd2 (8 g3!? Korchnoi-Sakaev, St Petersburg 1997) 8 ... Nxd2 9 Qxd2 a5 (other plans are 9 ... b6 10 a3 Bxc3 11 Nxc3 bxc5 12 dxc5 a5 13 Bb5+ Bd7 14 0-0 0-0 15 b4 Reshevsky-Najdorf, Dallas 1957; 9 ... Nc6 10 a3! Korchnoi-Spassky, 41st USSR Championship, Moscow 1973; 9 ... Qf6 10 a3! Korchnoi-Stanek, Pula 1997) 10 a3 Bxc3 11 Nxc3 with a slight but enduring advantage for White, as was confirmed in the game Korchnoi-Seirawan (Bad Kissingen 1981).

The alternative is 6 ... 0-0 7 a3 Be7, when White has a choice between the aggressive 8 d5 exd5 9 cxd5 Re8 (9 ... Bc5 10 b4 Bb6 11 Na4 Torre-Karpov, London 1984) 10 d6!? (in the early 1980s both 10 g3 and 10 Be3 were tried) 10 ... Bf8 11 g3 Re6 (11 ... Qb6?! 12 Bg2 Bxd6 13 Be3 Korchnoi-Miles, Wijk aan Zee 1984) 12 Bf4! (12 Bg2 Rxd6 is unclear, Gligoric-Karpov, Bugojno 1980) 12 ... Nh5 13 Be3 (Korchnoi-Kindermann, Beersheva 1984) and the quiet 8 g3, as Korchnoi played against A.Greenfeld (Beersheva 1997) and H.Olafsson (Reykjavik 2000), or 8 Nf4!? d5 9 cxd5 Nxd5 10 Ncxd5 exd5 11 Bd3 Nc6 12 0-0!, and again White has a slight but enduring advantage (Kramnik-Leko, 9th matchgame, Budapest rapidplay 2001).



6 a3 Bxc3+ 7 Nxc3 cxd4 8 exd4 dxc4 9 Bxc4 Nc6 10 Be3 0-0 11 0-0 b6

Since White, who as compensation for his 'isolani' has the advantage of the two bishops, is intending to attack on the kingside, Black must take secure control of the d5-square.



12 Qd3

Later it was established that 12 Qf3! Bb7 13 Bd3 sets Black more serious problems, for example:

1) 13 ... Qd7 (13 ... Rb8 14 Qg3! Beliavsky-Andersson, Bugojno 1984) 14 Qh3 Ne7 15 Bg5! (15 Rad1 is less energetic, Sadler-Karpov, Monaco rapidplay 1998) 17 ... Ng6 16 Bxf6 gxf6, and now not 17 d5 Bxd5 18 Rad1 Qc7! with sharp play (instead of 18 ... Rad8?! 19 Be4! Vaganian-A.Petrosian, Telavi 1982), but 17 Rad1! Rad8 18 Rfe1 or 18 Be4, and Black's position is worse on account of the weakness of his pawns and the constant threat of d4-d5;

2) 13 ... Rc8 14 Rad1 Rc7 15 Qh3 Ne7 16 Bg5 Ng6 17 Qg3 Rd7 18 d5! (Kasparov-Psakhis, 6th matchgame, Murcia 1990), or 14 ... h6 15 Qg3 Kh8 16 Qh3 Ng8?! 17 d5! (Korchnoi-Vyzhmanavin, Moscow rapidplay 1994), and in both cases the central breakthrough secured White a powerful initiative.

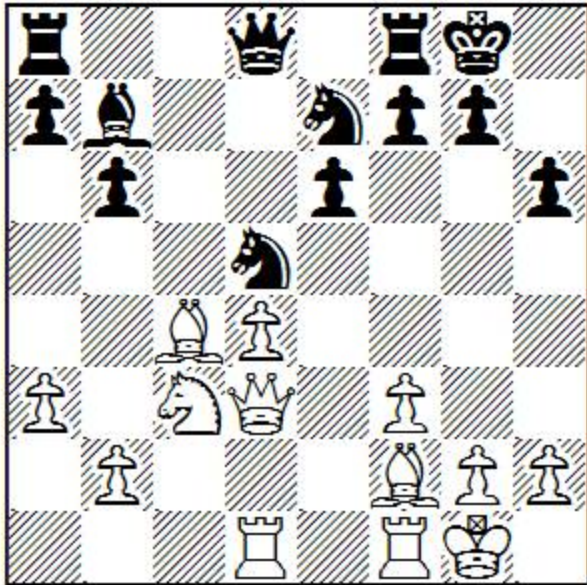
12 ... Bb7 13 Rad1 h6

'A useful prophylactic move, forestalling the threat of Bg5. However, it has the drawback of weakening the b1-h7 diagonal, and it is towards the exploitation of this weakness that White's subsequent actions are aimed.' (Averbakh)

14 f3!?

'A relatively new idea, which had already occurred in games of English masters: White prepares to switch his bishop to h4 or g3.' (Averbakh). I should also mention 14 Bf4 Ne7 15 Rfe1 Nfd5 16 Bg3 Ng6 17 f3 Rc8 18 Nxd5 Bxd5 19 Ba6 Ra8 20 Rc1 h5 21 Kf2 Qf6 22 Qe3 Rfe8 23 Be5 $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ (Korchnoi-C.Hansen, Biel 1992).

14 ... Ne7 15 Bf2 Nfd5



‘The strong d5-square ensures Black quite good prospects.’ (Tal).
 ‘15 ... Qd7 came into consideration, and if 16 Ba2, then 16 ... Rfc8 17 Bb1 Ng6 18 h4 Nd5 with an equal game.’ (Averbakh)

It would appear that Korchnoi was aiming not so much for an opening advantage, as for a complicated manoeuvring struggle in a position where the balance was somewhat disturbed. In the given instance the conflict is as though predetermined: the ‘isolani’ and the two bishops against the powerful outpost at d5 – which will prevail?

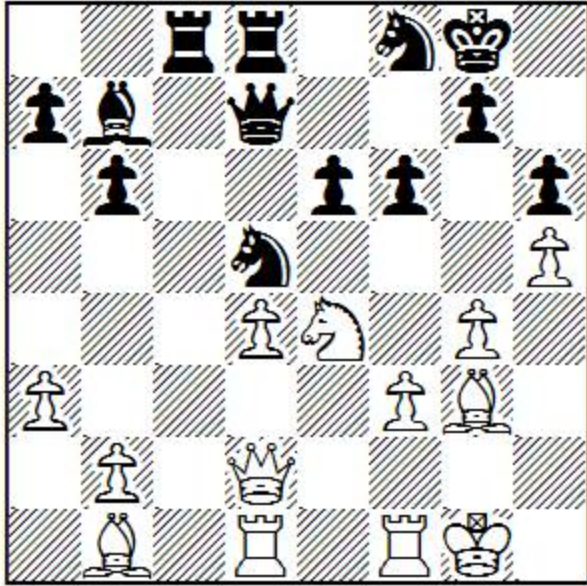
16 Ba2 Nf4

Here too Averbakh prefers 16 ... Qd7. ‘After 16 ... Nf5 Black would have to reckon with 17 Nxd5 Bxd5 18 Bb1, which all the same would have forced ... g7-g6 sooner or later. The world champion is not in a hurry to complete his development and he provokes his opponent into advancing his kingside pawns, reckoning that the weakening of White’s position may tell sooner or later.’ (Tal)

17 Qd2 Nfg6 18 Bb1 Qd7 19 h4! (the only way of fighting for the initiative)
19 ... Rfd8 20 h5 Nf8 21 Bh4 f6

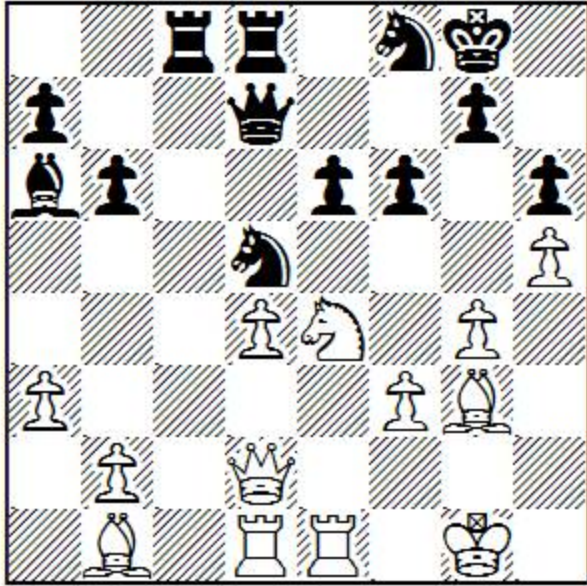
Black is forced to create a weakness at e6, but his position remains very solid.

22 Ne4 (threatening Bxf6) **22 ... Nd5** (according to Tal, ‘a forced and at the same time useful move, consolidating the position’) **23 g4 Rac8 24 Bg3**



White has hardly made much progress with his attack, and yet, by advancing his kingside pawns, Korchnoi has created certain problems for his opponent. And although, with the queens on the board, the exposure of the white king looks dangerous, the two bishops suppress Black's counterplay, attacking his defences from a distance, and the threat of setting up the Qd3 and Bb1 battery ties the knight to the f8-square.

24 ... Ba6 25 Rfe1



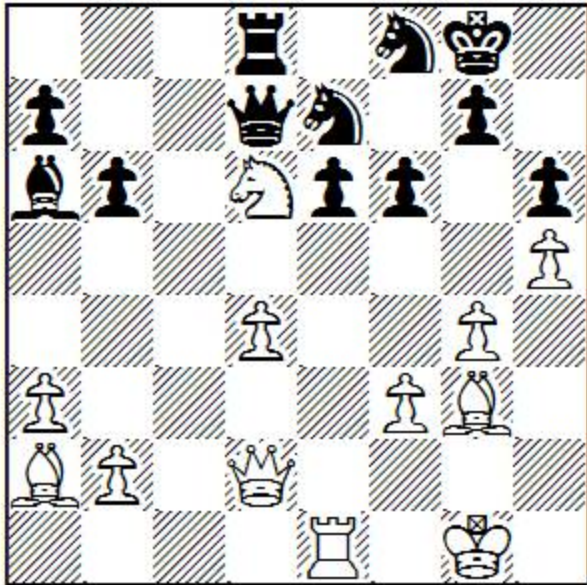
25 ... Rc6

'A continuation of the intended plan. The sharp 25 ... f5?! would have been fully justified after 26 Nd6 f4 (26 ... Rc6! – G.K.). However, in the event of 26 Nf2! the white knight would have switched to a favourable position.' (Tal)

26 Rc1 Ne7

An attempt to put pressure on the d4-pawn. 26 ... Bb7 is met by 27 Bc2 (with the threat of Ba4), and if 27 ... f5 28 Nf2. However, Tal and Averbakh thought that 26 ... Bb5!? was more accurate.

27 Rxc6 Qxc6 (27 ... Nxc6 28 Nd6 was worse for Black, since if 28 ... Qc7 there is 29 Qf4) 28 Ba2 Qd7 29 Nd6



29 ... Bb7

Tal thought that 'Karpov's decision to part with his light-squared bishop is the only correct one, since 29 ... Nd5 30 Bxd5 exd5 31 Qe3 is unfavourable for Black, while after the natural 29 ... Nc8 there is a spectacular combination – 30 Rxe6! (but not 30 d5? Nxd6 31 dxe6 Qe7 32 Bxd6 Rxd6 33 Qxd6 Qxd6 34 e7+ Kh7 35 e8Q Qg3+) 30 ... Nxe6 31 Qe3 Kf8 32 Bxe6 Qe7 33 Nf5 with dangerous threats.' More precisely – with a win: 33 ... Qe8 34 Be1! and Bb4+.

Averbakh indicated the correct reply – 32 ... Qa4!, but added that 'after 33 Nf5! White has a very strong attack'. However, if this variation is continued – 33 ... Qd1+!, it transpires that the two sides' chances are equal: 34 Kh2 Qc2+ (and not 35 Kh3? on account of 35 ... Bf1+ 36 Kh4 Qg2), 34 Be1 Bd3! (and 35 Bxc8? Re8 36 Be6 Bc4 is bad for White), or 34 Qe1 Rxd4! 35 Nxd4 Qxd4+ 36 Qf2 Qd1+ 37 Kg2 Ne7 38 Bf4 Be2.

30 Nf5 also did not achieve its aim in view of 30 ... Kh8, and if 31 Nh4 Ne7 32 Bf2 Bb7, while 31 Ne3(xh6) Qxd4 32 Qxd4 Rxd4 leads to simplification and a probable draw. Thus 29 ... Nc8!? would have made things easier for Black, but Karpov may not have liked the sharp variations that arise here: suppose White's attack should turn out to be decisive?!

30 Nxb7 Qxb7 31 Qe3 Kh8 (in Averbakh's opinion, serious consideration should have been given to **31 ... Nd5 32 Qe4 Qc6**, not conceding the c-file) **32 Rc1!**

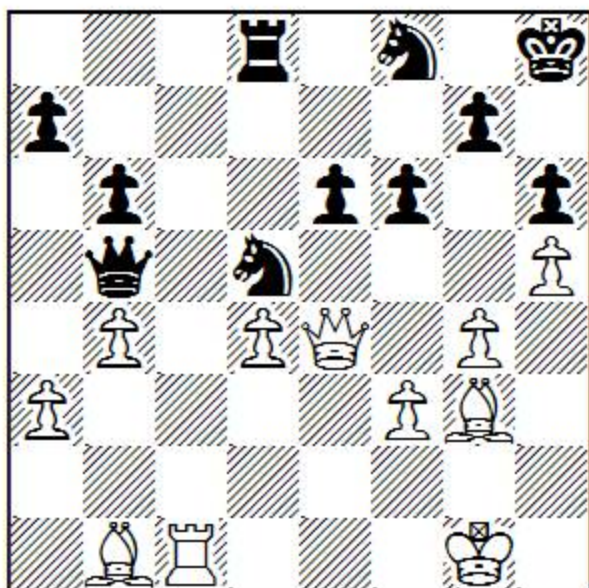
Of course, not **32 Bxe6?! Nxe6 33 Qxe6 Qxf3** with equality.

32 ... Nd5 33 Qe4 Qd7 (33 ... Rc8!?) 34 Bb1 Qb5

'On finding himself in a difficult position, Karpov resourcefully seeks counter-chances. For the moment he provokes a weakening of White's queenside.' (Tal)

35 b4

The trappy **35 Bd6?** would have been parried by **35 ... Qxb2 (35 ... Rxd6?? 36 Qh7+! Nxe7 37 Rc8+ and mate) 36 Rc6 Nc3 37 Rxc3 Qxc3 38 Bxf8 f5 39 gxf5 Rxd4 or 38 ... Qxd4+ 39 Qxd4 Rxd4 etc.**



35 ... Qd7?!

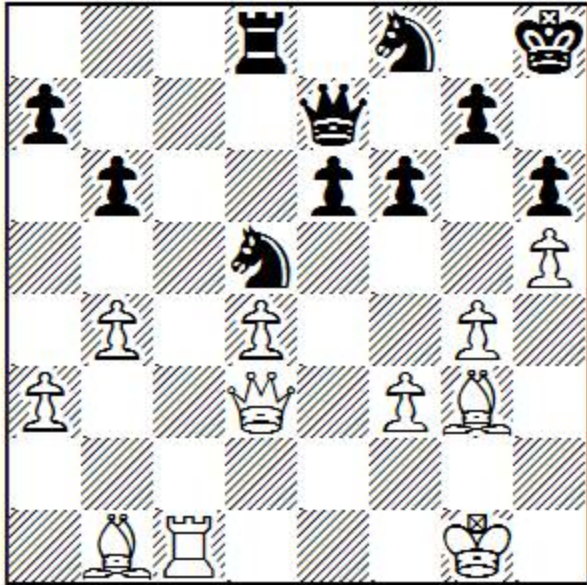
'Black returns his queen to the defence. Here Velimirovic recommended **35 ... a5**, but then **36 Bd6!** is possible, and after, for example, **36 ... f5 (36 ... Rxd6?? 37 Qh7+! – G.K.) 37 gxf5 Nf6 38 Qe5** the complications are in favour of White.' (Averbakh)

Even so, Karpov was wrong not to decide on the active move **35 ... a5!**, undermining the opponent's queenside. After **36 Bd6** he has the simple reply **36 ... Kg8!**, and if **37 Bxf8 Kxf8**, then **38 Qh7?** is bad in view of **38 ... Qe2! 39 Qh8+ Ke7 40 Qxg7+ Kd6** with a decisive counterattack, while **38 Qxe6 Nf4 39 Qc4 Qg5 40 Ba2(g6) Nd5** leads

to complicated play, where White's king is too exposed and Black will always find saving checks.

36 Qd3 Qe7

Now ... a7-a5 can be met by b4-b5, when the white rook acquires a new invasion square – c6.



37 Kf2 f5!?

'Taking account of the opponent's imminent time-trouble, Karpov abruptly sharpens the play,' Tal writes. 'Passive play would have been unpromising.' Indeed, after 37 ... Qd7 38 b5 Black has a difficult position: the bishops are clearly stronger than the knights, and White can constantly threaten the advantageous exchange of queens.

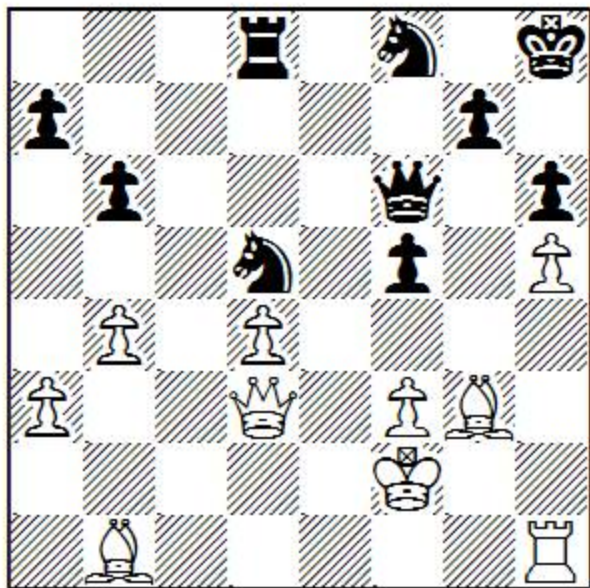
With the move played Black breaks up the enemy pawn chain and opens up the game, obtaining definite counter-chances associated with the exposed position of the white king. Queen and knight, and especially two knights, are a powerful force! However, White also acquires some trumps, such as the e5-square for his bishop. But the main thing is that, in search of a way to save the game, Karpov sharply changes the character of the play, which is especially unpleasant when the opponent is in time-trouble.

38 gxf5 exf5 39 Re1 Qf6 (before the time control move – a little trap!) **40 Be5**

As was pointed out by many commentators, the tempting 40 Re5? f4 41 Rf5 fxg3+ 42 Kg1 would have lost to 42 ... Nf4! 43 Qe4 Rxd4 44 Rxf6 Rd1+.

40 ... Qh4+ 41 Bg3 Qf6 42 Rh1!

‘After repeating moves to gain time on the clock, White continues playing for a win. It has to be admitted that he has sufficient grounds for this.’ (Tal)

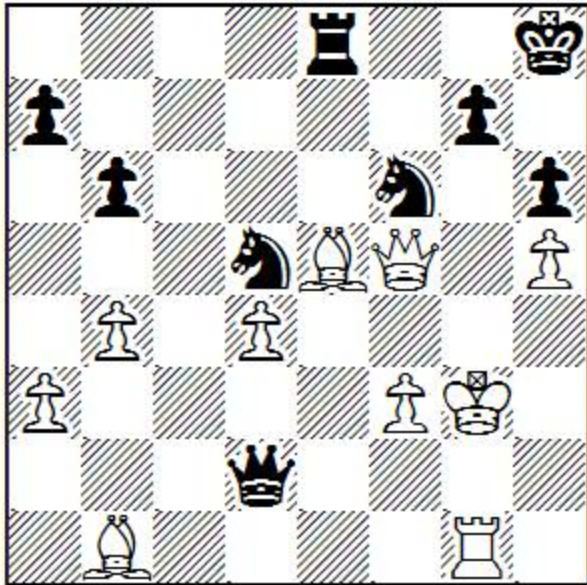


42 ... Nh7!

The sealed move. ‘The game was adjourned in a difficult position for Karpov. Even now I find it hard to understand how it happened that neither my seconds, nor the grandmaster journalists, nor I myself saw Karpov’s sealed move. The move was indeed strong, and at the board I had to spend some forty minutes outlining a plan. Soon after the resumption I ended up in severe time-trouble.’ (Korchnoi)

‘As it later transpired, the Korchnoi camp had mainly considered 42 ... Ne6 and 42 ... Qg5.’ (Tal). But 42 ... Ne6? is weak in view of 43 Be5 Ndf4 44 Qxf5 and wins, while 42 ... Qg5 43 Bh4 Qxh5 (43 ... Nf4 44 Qf1) 44 Qxf5 Qxf5 45 Bxf5 (Averbakh) 45 ... Re8 46 Bg3 leads to an endgame that is difficult for Black.

43 Be5 Qg5 44 Qxf5 Qd2+ 45 Kg3 Nhf6 46 Rg1 Re8?!



It is hard to say how deep and accurate the adjournment analysis was, since 46 ... Qe3! 47 Rg2 (47 Kh2 Qf2+) 47 ... Qxa3 (47 ... Ne7 48 Qd3!, aiming for the exchange of queens) 48 b5 Qb4 would have given Black a far more defensible position than in the game.

47 Be4!

This move took Korchnoi nearly all of his remaining time. If 47 Kh3? Karpov was intending 47 ... Rxe5! 48 dxe5 Nf4+ 49 Kg3 N4xh5+ 50 Kh3 Nf4+ with a draw.

47 ... Ne7 (47 ... Qe3 48 Kg2!) 48 Qh3 Rc8

‘Despite the material equality, the endgame after 48 ... Rf8 49 Rg2 Nxe4+ 50 Kh2! Ng5 51 Rxd2 Nxe3 52 Kxe3 Rxf3+ 53 Kg4 is unfavourable for Black.’ (Tal). White can also consider 49 Kh4!? Qa2 50 Bxf6 Rxf6 51 Qg3 Qg8 52 Qe5 Qf8 53 Kh3 and wins.

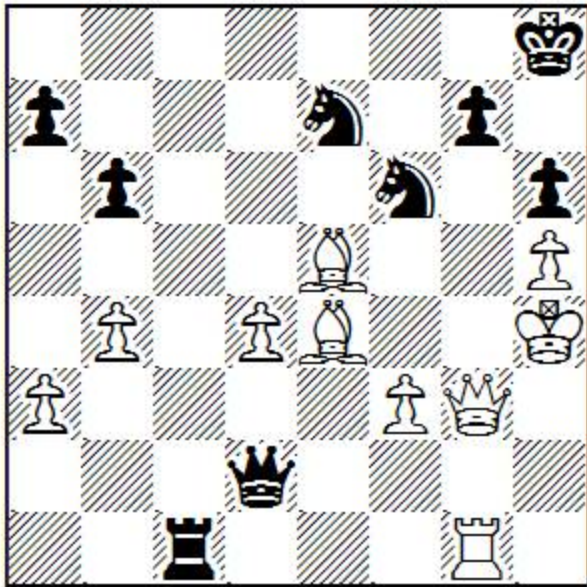
‘The attempt to win a pawn – 48 ... Qg5+ 49 Kh2 Qxh5 would have led to a difficult ending for Black after 50 Qxh5 Nxe5 51 Rc1. The world champion also strives to activate his rook.’ (Averbakh). The next eight moves to the time control were made at blitz speed by both players.

49 Kh4 Rc1 50 Qg3

‘50 Qg2, exchanging queens, came into consideration.’ (Averbakh). This is putting it mildly! With 50 Qg2! White would have achieved a won endgame: 50 ... Qxg2 (regarding 50 ... Qg5+?, cf. the note to the next move) 51 Rxg2 Rh1+ (51 ... Ra1 52 Rc2!) 52 Rh2 Nxe4 53 fxe4

(simpler than 53 Rxh1 Nf2! 54 Kg3! Nxh1+ 55 Kg2) 53 ... Re1 54 Kg4 Rxe4+ 55 Kf3 Re1 56 Rg2 Nf5 57 Kf4 Rf1+ 58 Ke4 Kg8 59 d5 Kf7 60 d6 etc.

Now, however, neither the queens, nor the rooks are exchanged, and Black retains hopes of saving the game. But this is not yet the last grimace of time-trouble ...



50 ... Rxg1

'The attempt to win the exchange – 50 ... Qg5+? 51 Qxg5 hxg5+ 52 Rxg5 Rh1+ 53 Kg3 Rg1+ 54 Kf4 Nfd5+ 55 Bxd5 Nxd5+ 56 Kf5 Ne7+ would have lost to 57 Ke6 Rxg5 58 Kxe7 Rxh5 59 f4, when the d-pawn cannot be stopped.' (Tal)

51 Qxg1 Kg8?! (51 ... Qa2 was more tenacious) 52 Qg3?!'

Tal makes no comment at this point, while Averbakh merely remarks that 'if 52 Bxf6 there is the reply 52 ... Qf4+.' However, after 53 Kh3 Qxf6 54 Qg4! White has a great advantage (54 ... Qxd4? 55 Bh7+). In addition, 52 d5 was very strong, since this pawn is taboo: 52 ... Nexd5? 53 Bxd5+ Qxd5 54 Bxf6.

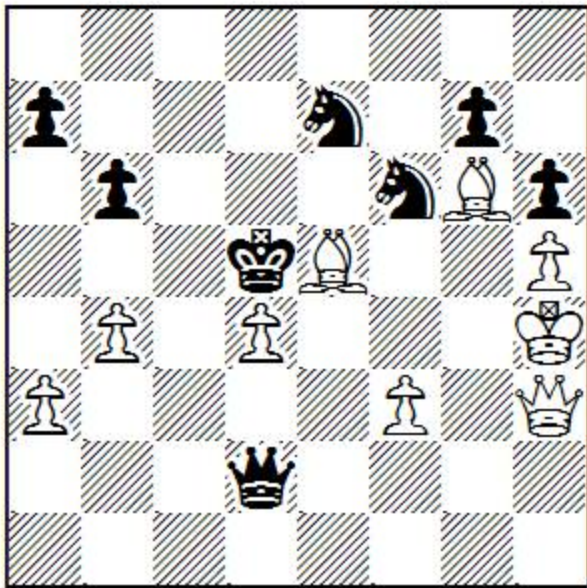
52 ... Kf7

'52 ... Kf8 was necessary, although even after this Black's position would have remained anxious.' (Tal). Thus after 53 Bxf6 gxf6 54 d5 f5 55 d6 fxe4 56 dxe7+ Kxe7 57 Qc7+ White reaches a queen ending with good winning chances.

53 Bg6+ Ke6??

Unexpectedly blundering into a mate in a few moves. If 53 ... Nxb6+?! 54 Qxb6+ Kf8(g8) 55 Qg3! Kf7 56 Bxf6 (56 b5 Qc1!?) 56 ... gxf6 57 Qc7+ Ke6 58 Qc6+ Ke7 59 Qd5 Black has a difficult queen endgame, but after 53 ... Kf8 he would have retained counter-chances in view of the open position of the white king (if 54 Kh3, then 54 ... Qc1).

54 Qh3+ Kd5

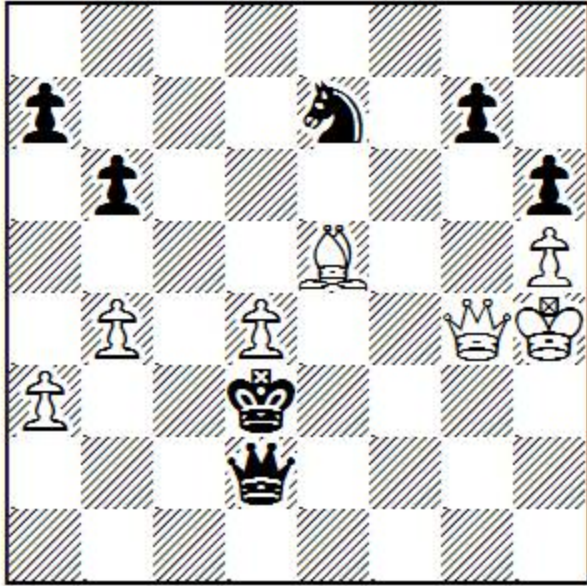


55 Be4+??

With his flag about to fall, Korchnoi overlooks a forced mate, which would have enabled him to open the score in the match: 55 Bf7+ Kc6 56 Qe6+ Kb7 57 Qxe7+ etc.

55 ... Nxe4 56 fxe4+ Kxe4 (the second time control was reached) 57 Qg4+ Kd3

'Here Korchnoi thought for 40 minutes. The active placing of all Black's pieces allows him to hope for a draw.' (Tal)



58 Qf3+

In Tal's opinion, 58 d5 was more dangerous, after which Black's 'only' way to save the game was 58 ... g5+ 59 hxg6 Qe1+ 60 Qg3+ Qxg3+ 61 Bxg3 Nxg6+ 62 Kh5 Nf8, neutralising the d-pawn (say, 63 Kxh6 Kc4 64 Kg7 Nd7 65 d6 a5 66 bxa5 bxa5 67 Kf7 Kd5 68 Ke7 Kc6 69 a4 Nb6 70 Ke6 Nd7). But Averbakh indicates a second way: 58 ... Qe1+ 59 Qg3+ Qxg3+ 60 Kxg3 Nxd5 61 Bxg7 Ke4 62 Bxh6 Nf6 63 Kh4 Kd3! 'and by giving up his knight for the h5-pawn, Black transposes into roughly the same ending as in the game.'

58 ... Qe3

As was pointed out by the commentators, 58 ... Kc4 would also have led to a draw with the queens on: 59 Qf7+ Kd3 60 Qxe7 Qe1+ with perpetual check. It is also possible to play 59 ... Nd5 60 Bxg7 Qg5+ or 60 Qxg7 Qe1+ 61 Qg3 Qe4+ etc.

59 Kg4

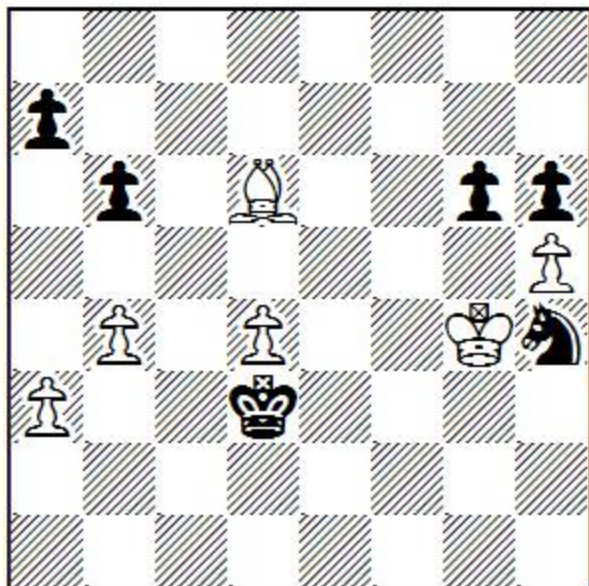
59 Qxe3+ Kxe3 was no better, for example: 60 Kg4 Ke4! 61 Bxg7 Nf5 62 Bf8 Ne3+ 63 Kh3 Nf5 with a draw (Averbakh), or 60 d5 g5+! 61 Kg4 Nxd5 62 Bg7 Kd3 63 Bxh6 Nf6+ 64 Kxg5 Nxh5 65 Kxh5 Kc4 66 Bf8 Kb3, eliminating the white pawns.

59 ... Qxf3+ 60 Kxf3 g6 61 Bd6 Nf5?!

Karpov stumbles literally a step away from a draw: 61 ... gxh5! 62 Bxe7 Kxd4 and ... Kc4-b3. Now White succeeds in laying waste to the

enemy kingside while retaining one of his pawns on the queenside.

62 Kf4 Nh4 (62 ... Nxd6? 63 hxg6 Ne8 64 d5 and wins) **63 Kg4**



63 ... gxh5+!

The knight has to be given up, since after 63 ... Nf5? 64 hxg6 Nxd6 65 Kf4 it again cannot stop the two passed pawns.

64 Kxh4 Kxd4 65 Bb8

‘Otherwise the draw is achieved very simply.’ (Averbakh). ‘A curious ending, in which Black has to be extremely careful.’ (Tal)

65 ... a5 66 Bd6 Kc4 67 Kxh5 a4 68 Kxh6 Kb3!

Forcing White to give up his good b-pawn and remain with his bad a3-pawn. Black would have lost after 68 ... b5? 69 Kg5 Kb3 70 Kf5 Kxa3 71 Ke5 Kb3 72 Kd5 a3 73 Kc5 a2 74 Be5.

69 b5 Kc4 70 Kg5 Kxb5

A theoretically drawn endgame has been reached, where White has an extra bishop and a rook’s pawn, where the queening square is of the wrong colour. The method for gaining a draw in such positions (with an a3-pawn against pawns at a4 and b5) was analysed in detail by grandmaster Averbakh in his endgame series first published in 1956.

71 Kf5 Ka6 72 Ke6 Ka7

‘For the moment the black king does not abandon this corner. White would win if he were able to stalemate the king and thereby force the advance of the b-pawn. But he is not able to achieve this.’ (Tal)

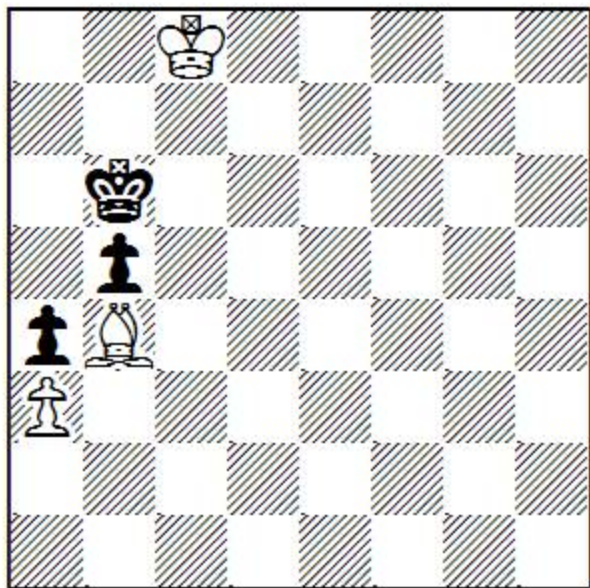
73 Kd7 Kb7 74 Be7 Ka7 75 Kc7 Ka8 76 Bd6 Ka7 (76 ... b5? 77 Bc5 and wins)
77 Kc8 Ka6

But not 77 ... Ka8? 78 Bb8 b5 79 Kc7, forcing 79 ... b4 80 axb4 a3 81 b5 a2 82 b6 and 83 b7 mate. This winning method, pointed out of Horwitz (1885), was also given by Euwe in *Practische Schaaklessen* (1927). But generally speaking, this method of stalemating the king has been known since time immemorial.

78 Kb8 b5

The last pawn move. 'Taking into account the fifty-move rule, there was a sigh of relief in the press centre: the game would conclude not later than the 128th move ...' (Tal)

79 Bb4 (parrying the threat of 79 ... b4 80 Bxb4 Kb6 with a draw) 79 ... Kb6 80 Kc8



80 ... Kc6!

'Only by moving away from the corner can Black save the game.' (Averbakh). After 80 ... Ka6? 81 Kc7 Ka7 82 Bc5+ Ka6 83 Kc6 Ka5 84 Be3 Ka6 85 Bb6 White wins.

81 Kd8 Kd5

'For more than forty moves White tries in vain to shake the well-known verdict of theory – draw! But at the same time Black must act very carefully: his king is constantly on the edge of the danger zone.' (Tal)

**82 Ke7 Ke5 83 Kf7 Kd5 84 Kf6 Kd4 85 Ke6 Ke4 86 Bf8 Kd4 87 Kd6 Ke4 88 Bg7 Kf4
89 Ke6 Kf3 90 Ke5 Kg4 91 Bf6 Kh5**

Here the game was adjourned for the second time and concluded only after the next game, the 6th (English Opening, draw on the 23rd move). Some care was still demanded of Karpov, and together with his trainers he no doubt refreshed his memory of the classical analyses, demonstrating that the black king cannot be driven away.

**92 Kf5 (the sealed move) 92 ... Kh6 93 Bd4 Kh7 94 Kf6 Kh6 95 Be3+ Kh5 96
Kf5 Kh4 97 Bd2 Kg3 98 Bg5 Kf3 99 Bf4 Kg2 100 Bd6 Kf3 101 Bh2 Kg2 102 Bc7 Kf3 103
Bd6 Ke3 104 Ke5 Kf3 105 Kd5 Kg4 106 Kc5 Kf5 107 Kxb5 Ke6 108 Kc6**

Of course, not 108 Bh2 Kd7 109 Kxa4 Kc6(8) and ... Kb7-a8 with a draw.

108 ... Kf6

A similar ending (with an a3-pawn against a pawn at a4) was analysed by Kling and Horwitz (1851), Berger (1921) and the Soviet theoretician Rauzer (1928), who introduced the rule of the drawing zone for the black king. And Karpov, following this rule, achieves a draw.

109 Kd7 Kg7 110 Be7 Kg8 111 Ke6 Kg7 112 Bc5 Kg8 113 Kf6 Kh7 114 Kf7 Kh8 115 Bd4+ Kh7 116 Bb2 Kh6 117 Kg8 Kg6 118 Bg7 Kf5 119 Kf7 Kg5 120 Bb2 Kh6 121 Bc1+ Kh7 122 Bd2 Kh8 123 Bc3+ Kh7 124 Bg7 ½-½

Stalemate! According to eye-witnesses, when the draw was finally recorded, Baturinsky exchanged kisses with Campomanes in front of everyone!

‘At first I checked the accuracy of Karpov’s defence in an ending that was difficult for him,’ explains Korchnoi, ‘and then, having established that he had learned his “homework” well, I allowed myself the pleasure of stalemating the world champion. Firstly, in this way I did not need to offer him a draw. And secondly, however natural stalemate is in a chess game, to be stalemated is slightly humiliating. Funny, but it’s true! It is probable that after this Karpov considered himself somewhat insulted.’

At any event, Karpov did not stand up to shake hands before the start of the 7th game, and he did this ‘with a reproachful smirk’ only after his opponent had sat down. Korchnoi: ‘Within a moment I also stood up ... It is now clear to me that this was a subtly planned overture to the performance before the next game.’

But the 7th, in his view, became the first of numerous extraordinary games in this match. The challenger gained an obvious advantage from the opening, and won the exchange (cf. the note to Black’s 8th move in *Game No.76*), but roughly from the 27th move the play of both contestants began to be affected by the imminent time scramble. And by something else! ‘Fearing the Soviet psychologist, I played this game from a shelter – I sat mainly not on the stage, but in the rest room in front of a monitor,’ writes Korchnoi. ‘Only when Karpov made his move did I unwillingly come to the board, not wishing to repeat Spassky’s behaviour in his match with me. Not being used to this – normally I sit at the board for almost the full five hours – I played far from my best.’

The adjourned position already seemed hopeless for Korchnoi, but together with Murey he found a not altogether easy way to draw. The following day the champion merely looked at his opponent’s obvious sealed move – and immediately offered a draw. Which provoked new suspicions in the challenger’s camp. ‘Why didn’t Karpov bother to check our home analysis? Is it possible that he knew it before the start of the resumption?!’

Another unpleasant surprise awaited Korchnoi in the 8th game. Before the start of it, as usual, he offered his hand to his opponent, but

the latter suddenly replied that he would no longer shake hands with him, 'because he was behaving indecently'. The astonished Korchnoi turned to Schmid who was standing alongside: 'Do you understand what is happening?' (according to the rules, Karpov was obliged to warn the arbiter beforehand). The arbiter confusedly muttered that this could have been expected – and started the clocks. Korchnoi was beside himself: 'What a blatant, perfidious violation of the agreement! The shot hit home: I played like a child.'

In addition there also followed an opening surprise: 1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bb5 a6 4 Ba4 Nf6 5 0-0 Nxe4 6 d4 b5 7 Bb3 d5 8 dxe5 Be6 9 Nbd2!? (instead of the customary 9 c3 Bc5 – *Game Nos.35 and 75*) 9 ... Nc5 10 c3, and after 40 minutes'(!) thought Korchnoi made the 'secondary' move 10 ... g6?! The 10th game went 10 ... d4 11 Ng5!? – Igor Zaitsev's remarkable novelty (*Volume 2, Game No.118*), and Black gained a draw only with difficulty. The reply 10 ... g6 came as a surprise to Karpov, but he found a strong pawn sacrifice: 11 Qe2 Bg7 12 Nd4! Nxe5?! 13 f4 Nc4 14 f5 gxf5 15 Nxf5, and Black resigned as early as the 28th move. 'Karpov conducted the attack quite well. In a first category tournament such a game would have been judged quite highly.' (Korchnoi)

However, the champion was unable to build on his success. After two draws the challenger levelled the scores in the 11th game, after employing a rare set-up: 1 g3 c5 2 Bg2 Nc6 3 e4 g6 4 d3 Bg7 5 f4 d6 6 Nf3 Nf6 7 0-0 0-0 8 c3 etc. On the 26th move Black blundered and on the 51st he resigned. 'I had a reasonable position, but suddenly an inexplicable decline set in ... Yes, days occur when apathy sets in, and then everything seems to go wrong.' (Karpov)

Korchnoi comments: 'Perhaps Karpov is hinting at the fact that his poor psychologist, after agreeing to be moved back to the 7th row, was unable to help the champion? Or at something else in the same field? The point is that for the 11th game my psychologist V.Berginer arrived, and, unrecognised by anyone, he calmly took his place in the 5th row ... The opponent did not repeat his mistake again. Breaking the verbal gentlemen's agreement, from the next game Zukhar again sat in the 4th row. My psychologist was identified and, using their vast numerical superiority in the auditorium, they smothered him "with care and attention". He was no longer able to work effectively. It became clear to me that in this situation Berginer was powerless, and he departed after the 14th game.'

In the 12th game Korchnoi held out in a somewhat inferior endgame. And the 13th game, in his opinion, could have become one of the best of the match, but alas ... An account of this dramatic game and the following one, the 14th, is given in the chapter on Karpov (*Game Nos.74 and 75*). After gaining two successive wins, the champion finally moved into a commanding lead: 3-1. Korchnoi: 'From that moment the Soviets, aided by Campomanes, introduced a system of police surveillance in the hall. Every spectator had to show a means of identity when buying a ticket. A close watch was kept on any "suspicious" persons. In order that Zukhar should not be distracted, he was always surrounded by his own men.'

Storm clouds hovered over Baguio for the whole of August: the appeal jury was constantly meeting – there was an exchange of forceful and lengthy statements between the delegations of the warring sides regarding the refusal to shake hands, the role of Dr Zukhar (who is he: a psychologist or a parapsychologist?), the 'anti-Soviet propaganda' on the part of Frau Leeuwerik, her right to represent Switzerland, and so on. The atmosphere was ultra-heated!

During the 15th game Karpov 'introduced a new type of weapon into the battle': he began rocking his chair. Korchnoi: 'A convenient chair: while the opponent is thinking over his move, one can sit there and rock! I walked away from the board, adopted a "Spassky-like pose", and began studying the position on the demonstration board.' When Schmid made a comment to Karpov, the latter replied: "This disturbs him, but I am disturbed by his glasses." Within some fifteen minutes the rocking ceased: the position had become drawish ... ' A draw was also concluded in the 16th game, where the French Defence occurred for the first time in the match.

The 17th game was a tragic one for Korchnoi. When he arrived, he summoned Campomanes and demanded that Zukhar be moved back to the 7th row. 'But the jury decided ... ' Campo was about to reply. 'Move him within ten minutes, or I'll deal with him myself!' declared Korchnoi, shaking his fists. 'Campomanes began fussing about and gathered the Soviets around him. Karpov arrived. On seeing that that my clock was running, he smirked and went off to his rest room. It was nothing to do with him! As if he had not been the one to lose his temper when Schmid tried to expel Zukhar from the hall during the 9th game!'

Soon the challenger's demand was met: Campomanes cleared the front six rows of spectators, and Zukhar ended up in the 7th

(incidentally, that day some thirty-odd Soviet tourists were also present at the game). 'This modest victory did not come easily,' writes Korchnoi. 'I wasted a mass of energy and eleven minutes of precious time! Is it possible to play a serious, intense game after expending so much nervous energy? It proved to be difficult. Karpov was completely outplayed, but then ... Then I began to make blunders, and first I missed an obvious win, and finally, in time-trouble, I contrived to fall into a ridiculous mate in a drawn position!' (*Game No.76*).

The score became 4-1 in Karpov's favour, and the outcome of the match seemed decided. Korchnoi: 'I was in a terrible state. I claimed my last two time-outs and together with Frau Leeuwerik I went to Manila, to at least relax a little and come to.' In Manila he gave a press conference, at which he disclosed that the 'pact of the Soviets with Campomanes' and also the Soviet 'chess' novelty in the person of Zukhar had been prepared earlier for the match with Fischer. And he demanded that a glass screen should be installed between the players and the spectators, stating: 'The centaur with the head of Zukhar and the body of Karpov must be split in two, otherwise the match is impossible!'

But Stean and Murey persuaded him to continue the match. Keene and Baturinsky signed a written 'gentlemen's' agreement, according to which Korchnoi gave up his demand for the installation of a glass screen and his use of mirrored glasses (apparently they 'impeded Karpov's vision'), and Karpov agreed that 'starting from the 18th game and to the end of the match, professor Zukhar would sit in the sector allotted for the official members of the Soviet chess delegation'.

The next three fighting games ended in draws, though in the 20th (where Korchnoi first tried the Caro-Kann) a miracle occurred: Karpov achieved an absolutely won position, but he sealed a second-rate move (after half an hour's thought!) and missed a seemingly certain win on the resumption.

A new twist in the confrontation began from the 19th game. Korchnoi: 'I acquired some voluntary, unpaid assistants – two yogis, the Americans Stephen Dwyer and Victoria Shepperd. They only had to enter the hall and seat themselves in the lotus posture, for something to happen with Zukhar. He covered his face with a handkerchief, and within a short time he left the hall – for good, until the end of the game.' Before the 21st game the jury again assembled. 'Campomanes announced that my yogis, members of the Ananda Marga organisation,

had been accused of murdering an Indian diplomat, but released on bail for lack of evidence, and as potential criminals they should not be in the hall. Such was the Soviet viewpoint! Throughout the world the “presumption of innocence” is adopted: until evidence has been gathered to show that a person has committed a crime, he cannot be treated as a criminal. Here it was just the opposite! But it was clear that dangerous criminals, real terrorists, would not have been released for any money.’

Nevertheless, the jury removed the yogis from the hall, and then from the hotel where Korchnoi was living. He was very angered when he learned that his new helpers, graduates from Harvard University – Dada and Didi to give them their Eastern names – had been forced to give a written undertaking not to leave his out of town villa, where they were living. And of course he submitted another protest ...

In the 21st game there again, as in the 9th, occurred the variation of the Queen’s Gambit with 5 Bf4, which owes its subsequent popularity to Korchnoi. In all three games of the match in Baguio, played with this variation, Karpov had to conduct a difficult defence. In the 21st game he tried to solve his problems with the help of an extremely risky, but unexpected counterattack in the opening, involving a sacrifice of material. Such a bluff could well have worked in the pre-computer era, and besides, Karpov firmly held the initiative in the match – his opponent, by his own admission, was exhausted.

But the challenger conducted the game with staggering composure and later called it his best achievement in the match. It should be said that, apart from Korchnoi himself, this uncommonly complicated and fascinating encounter has been annotated at various times by many well-known writers: Tal, Larsen, Kholmov, Filip, Panno, Pachman, Keene, Timman, Dvoretsky ...

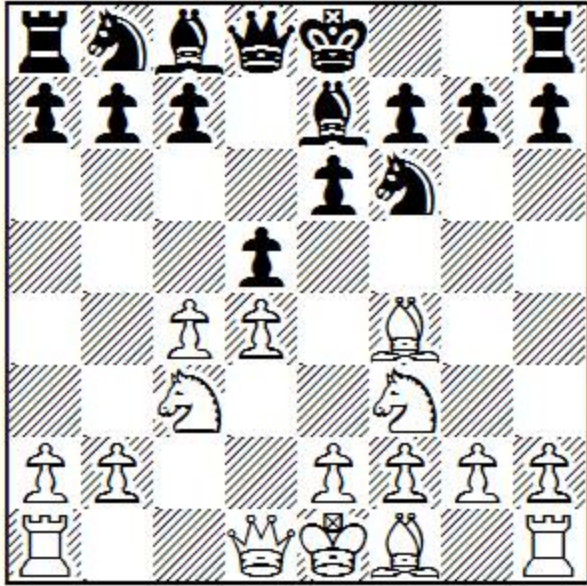
Game 30

V.Korchnoi-A.Karpov

World Championship Match, Baguio 1978, 21st game

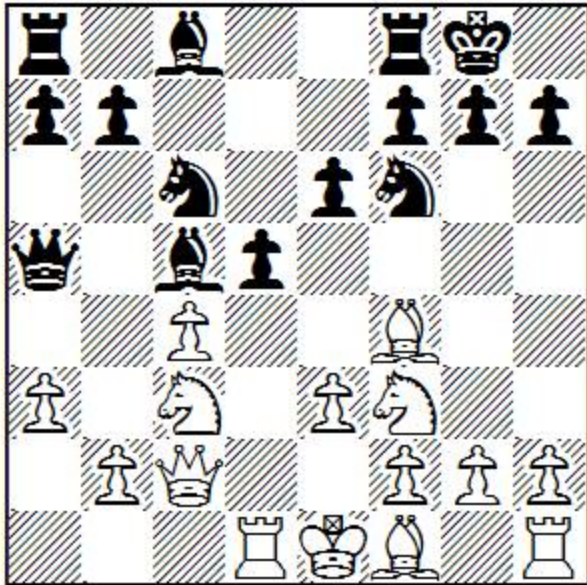
Queen’s Gambit D37

1 c4 Nf6 2 Nc3 e6 3 Nf3 d5 4 d4 Be7 5 Bf4



In contrast to 5 Bg5, this move, in the words of Korchnoi, 'is less well studied, and gives scope for the creative imagination of players and (especially!) their trainers.' In the 1960s-1970s 5 Bf4 was occasionally played by Petrosian, and also the Hungarian players Portisch, Forintos and Farago.

5 ... 0-0 6 e3 c5 7 dxc5 Bxc5 8 Qc2 Nc6 9 Rd1 (after 9 a3 Qa5 White retains a choice between 10 Rd1, the modest 10 Rc1, and the more ambitious continuations 10 Nd2!? or 10 0-0-0!? – cf. *Volume 4, Game No.41*) 9 ... Qa5 10 a3



10 ... Re8?!

'Another innovation by the formidable Soviet team. Exploiting his slight lead in development, Black tries to build up an attack on the white king caught in the centre. One has to give Karpov his due. It extremely rarely occurs to him to create something new on the chessboard. According to rumours, the rook move to e8 was the brainchild of one of the people from his headquarters – grandmaster Igor Zaitsev,' Korchnoi comments, not without venom.

The main line is still 10 ... Be7 11 Nd2 e5 (when in 1979, inspired by his opponent's opening ideas, Karpov employed this variation with White against Spassky, the latter replied 11 ... Bd7?! and failed to equalise) 12 Bg5 d4 13 Nb3, and here there is a great amount of theory, the basis of which was laid in Baguio:

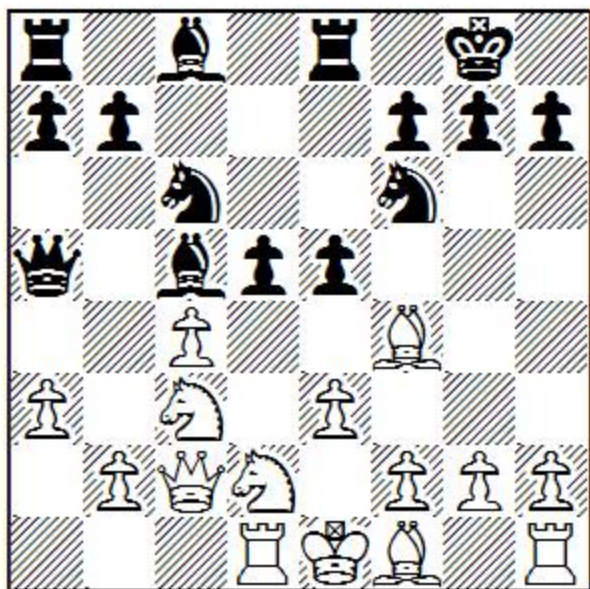
1) 13 ... Qd8 14 Be2 h6 (14 ... Ng4!? Petrosian-Filip, Curaçao Candidates 1962; Portisch-Spassky, Havana Olympiad 1966) 15 Bxf6 Bxf6 16 0-0 Be6 (16 ... g6!?) 17 Nc5 Qe7 18 Nxe6 Qxe6 19 Nd5 with a slight advantage for White (9th game);

Later it transpired that 14 ... a5! is stronger – the history of this variation includes the games Farago-Geller (Novi Sad 1979), Korchnoi-Hübner (6th matchgame, Merano 1980/81), Portisch-Beliavsky (Moscow 1981), Korchnoi-Karpov (11th matchgame, Merano 1981)

etc., right up to the simultaneous game Alterman-Kasparov (Tel Aviv 1998);

2) 13 ... Qb6 (a more tedious continuation, after which Black experiences certain technical difficulties) 14 Bxf6 Bxf6 15 Nd5 Qd8 16 Bd3 g6 17 exd4 Nxd4 18 Nxd4 exd4 19 Nxf6+ Qxf6 20 0-0 Be6 21 Rfe1 (21 f4!? Forintos) 21 ... Rac8 22 b3 Rfd8, and in the end Karpov gained a draw (23rd game).

11 Nd2! (with the threat of b2-b4; 11 b4 Nxb4 or 11 Ne5 d4! is bad for White) 11 ... e5



12 Bg5 Nd4

It is this that comprises Black's main idea. 'Having destroyed his base in the centre, he is obliged to continue in sacrificial style. After 12 ... d4 13 Nb3 Qb6 14 Na4 Bb4+ 15 axb4 Qxb4+ 16 Nd2 White repulses the attack.' (Korchnoi). Thus 16 ... dxe3 17 fxe3 Nd4 does not work in view of 18 exd4 exd4+ 19 Kf2 and wins (Dvoretsky).

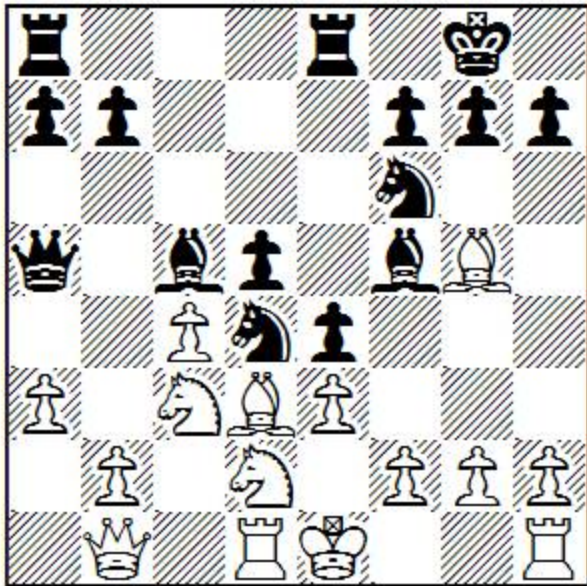
13 Qb1!

The only correct decision! The cowardly 13 Qa4 Qxa4 14 Nxa4 Nc2+ 15 Ke2 Nd4+! 16 Ke1 would have led only to a draw. 'Since Karpov had played the first 12 moves in half a minute, I had no desire to check the correctness of the sacrifice, especially since a grandmaster of my age and with my experience can often determine the suitability of a sacrifice at a glance. The position after 13 exd4

exd4+ 14 Ne2 Ne4 15 Bh4 Bf5 did not appeal to me, so I did not bother looking any further.' (Korchnoi) In fact, 14 ... Ng4! (with the same threat of ... d4-d3 and ... Bxf2 mate) is even better: 15 Bh4 d3! 16 Qxd3 Ne5 17 Qxd5 Bf5, and the stalemated white pieces are unable to help their king (18 b4 Bxb4 etc.).

13 ... Bf5 (13 ... Bg4? 14 Bxf6 gxf6 15 Nxd5 and wins) 14 Bd3 e4?!

In order to exploit the energy of the rook at e8, Black would like to open the e-file. However, he had a more tenacious alternative: 14 ... Bxd3 15 Qxd3 Ne4 16 Ncxe4 dxe4 17 Qxe4 Nb3 18 Qc2 Nxd2 19 Rxd2 (19 Qxd2 Qa4! with counterplay for the pawn, but not Tal's variation 19 ... Qxd2+?! 20 Rxd2 h6 21 Bh4 g5 22 Bg3 f5 on account of 23 Rd5!) 19 ... f6 20 Bxf6! (if 20 Bh4, then 20 ... Bf8(e7) is acceptable – Marin) 20 ... gxf6 21 b4 Qxa3 22 bxc5 Qa1+ 23 Rd1 Qa5+ 24 Ke2 or 22 ... Qxc5 23 0-0 Rad8 24 Rfd1, and in view of the weakened position of his king, Black stands somewhat worse.



White faces a difficult problem. One thing is clear: after the immediate 15 Bxf6? exd3 the rook at e8 begins to operate and Black gains excellent counterplay: 16 Bxd4 Bxd4 17 Nxd5 b5 etc. This means that the bishop must be moved from d3. But where to?

15 Bc2!?

Again Korchnoi gives a remarkable comment: 'How many times have I been reproached for "pawn-grabbing", for aiming to capture

material at any cost, however terrible the attack that I had to withstand for this material! But here I refrained from 15 Bf1, which would have given White a material advantage, although I did not see a direct refutation of it. And home analysis after the game showed that White can repulse the attack. But what complicated variations! ... But it was not in vain that I played for three months with the most practical champion in the history of chess! Even I was able to learn a little about how to economise on time and energy. And I had learned! And in a couple of minutes, without delving into details, on general grounds I made a practical, *Karpovian* move.'

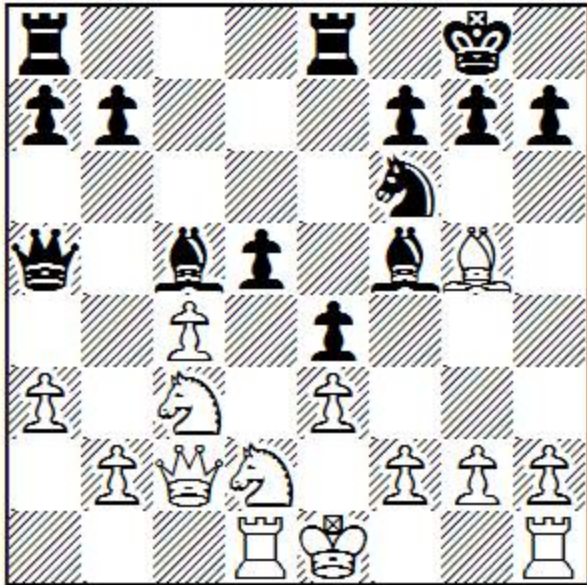
An important psychological nuance: after the paradoxical 'Steinitzian' 15 Bf1! White would have come under an attack, without knowing how deeply all its variations had been analysed at home by his opponent. We will consider two directions:

1) 15 ... Bxa3?! 16 Bxf6 gxf6 17 Qc1 Bb4 18 exd4 e3 (Korchnoi) 19 Nf3!, or 17 cxd5 Bb4 18 exd4, and Black has no real compensation for the sacrificed piece: if 18 ... e3 19 Qxf5 Bxc3 20 bxc3 Qxc3, then 21 Qg4+! Kh8 22 fxe3 (Timman) 22 ... Rxe3+ 23 Kf2! or 22 ... Qxe3+ 23 Be2 with a decisive advantage;

2) 15 Ng4 16 cxd5 Ne5 17 exd4! (in Korchnoi's variation 17 Qc1 Nd3+ 18 Bxd3 exd3 19 b4 Qa6 20 bxc5 Qg6, in my opinion, 21 h4! h6 22 Kf1 is strong, while Black has 19 ... Bxb4!? 20 axb4 Qxb4 with sharp play), and White retains the advantage both after 17 ... Bxd4 18 Be3 Bxe3 19 fxe3 Qc5 20 Ndx4 Qxe3+ 21 Be2 (Timman) or 18 Be2 Nd3+ (18 ... Bxf2+?! 19 Kf1!) 19 Kf1, and after 17 ... Nf3+ 18 gxf3 exf3+ 19 Nde4 Rxe4+ 20 Qxe4! or 19 ... Bxe4 20 Qc1 and Be3, when he begins the conversion of his extra material.

Nevertheless, Korchnoi quickly played 15 Bc2, having soberly judged that after this move (in contrast to the objectively stronger 15 Bf1) White faced no particular threats, and even if he did not gain a big advantage, the opponent would have to switch from his attack to the study of inferior positions, where the limit of Black's dreams would be a draw.

15 ... Nxc2+ 16 Qxc2



16 ... Qa6

A difficult choice. Larsen suggested 16 ... d4, but this is weak on account of 17 Bxf6 dxc3 (17 ... gxf6 18 Nb3 d3 19 Qxd3!, while Tal's idea 17 ... dxe3 18 fxe3 Bxe3 is incorrect in view of 19 Nf1!) 18 Qxc3 Qb6 (exchange queens?!) 19 g4! Bxg4 (otherwise 20 Bxg7) 20 Rg1, and it is now White who is on the attack.

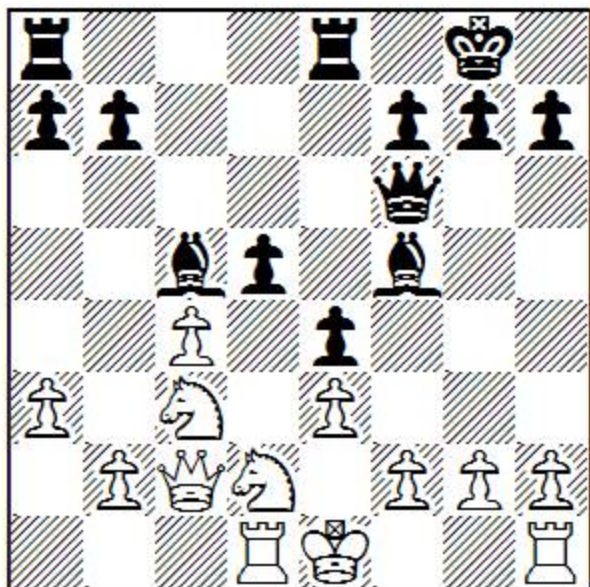
But 16 ... dxc4 17 Bxf6 gxf6 (Kholmov) came into consideration, not fearing 18 Nxc4 in view of 18 ... Qa6 19 Qa4 (weaker is 19 Nd5?! Rac8 20 Qc3 Be7 or 19 Rd5 Qxc4 20 Rxf5 Rac8 with the threat of ... Bxa3) 19 ... Qe6! 20 0-0 (20 Na5 Bf8!?) 20 ... a6 with a good game for Black: the two bishops and various tactical resources compensate for the weakening of his kingside.

However, Korchnoi was planning 18 0-0! with the threats of b2-b4 and Ndx e4. Indeed, after 18 ... Bf8 (18 ... Kg7? 19 b4!) 19 Ndx e4 Qe5 20 Rd4 Rac8 21 Qd2 White has a clear advantage. In the event of 18 ... Qa6 19 Nd5 Rac8 20 Qxc4 Qe6 21 Nf4 (Korchnoi) 21 ... Qxc4 22 Nxc4 Red8! (Dvoretsky) it is not so great, but 20 f3! is better, beginning to play for an attack.

'With the move in the game Karpov sacrifices a pawn, but prevents the break-up of his kingside pawns. It is possible that the continuation chose by him is objectively weaker than 16 ... dxc4 17 Bxf6 gxf6, but it should not be forgotten that over the three months I also taught the

champion something – to avoid irreparable pawn weaknesses!’ (Korchnoi). With this idea 16 ... Be7 17 Bxf6 Bxf6 18 Nxd5 Be5 (Tal) 19 0-0 Rac8 is also interesting, although after 20 Qb3 Qa6 21 f3 exf3 22 Nxf3 or 21 ... Bd7 22 Rc1 the powerful knight at d5 prevents Black from achieving equality.

17 Bxf6 Qxf6



18 Nb3!

Perhaps Karpov was expecting 18 Nxd5 Qg5 (Tal) 19 0-0 Bd6! (Dvoretsky), provoking g2-g3 and obtaining good play for the sacrificed pawn. But White plays more strongly, gaining a tempo by the attack on the bishop at c5.

18 ... Bd6 19 Rxd5 Re5

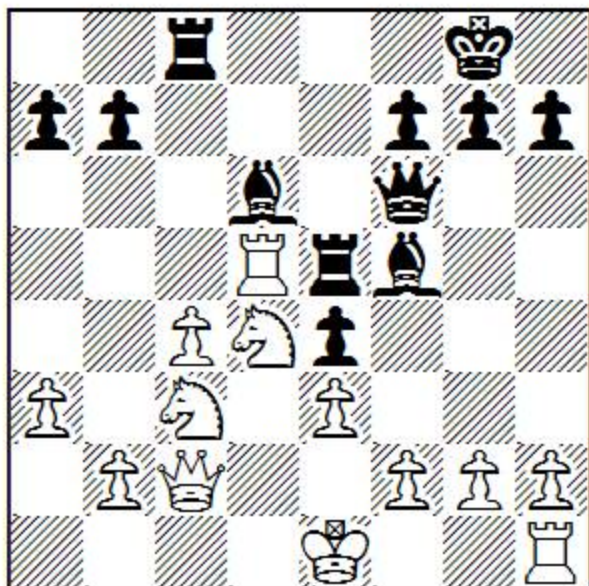
Forced. 19 ... Be5 20 Nd4 Bxd4 21 Rxd4 Qg5 is pointless in view of 22 0-0! Bh3 23 f4 exf3 24 Rxf3, and after 24 ... Rxe3 25 Qd2! Re1+ 26 Kf2 Qxg2+ 27 Kxe1 Re8+ 28 Re4 White wins (Dvoretsky).

Korchnoi gives 19 ... Qg6 20 0-0 Qh6 (20 ... Bh3? 21 f4) 21 g3, with the summary: ‘Karpov apparently decided that all the same he would be unable to exploit this weakening, and he preferred to exchange the centralised white pieces.’ And indeed, 21 ... Bg4? is bad – 22 Nxe4 Bf3 23 Nbd2 Rxe4 24 Nxf3 and wins (Kholmov), while after 21 ... Qg6 (21 ... Be5 22 f4!) 22 Nd4 Bh3 23 Rd1 Bf8 24 Nde2 Bg4 25 R1d4 and Nf4

White is a pawn up and he dominates the centre – Black's e4-pawn is weak and his bishops cannot find employment.

20 Nd4 Rc8

Another very important moment.



21 Rxe5!

'Faithful to his tactics, Korchnoi avoids a "close-range fight". Meanwhile, by 21 f4 he could have placed his opponent in a difficult position, since the piece sacrifice 21 ... exf3? 22 Nxf5 fxg2 23 Rg1 is insufficient.' (Tal). But in fact after 21 ... Rxd5 22 Nxd5 Qh4+ 23 Qf2 Qh5 or 23 g3 Qh3 things are better for Black than in the game.

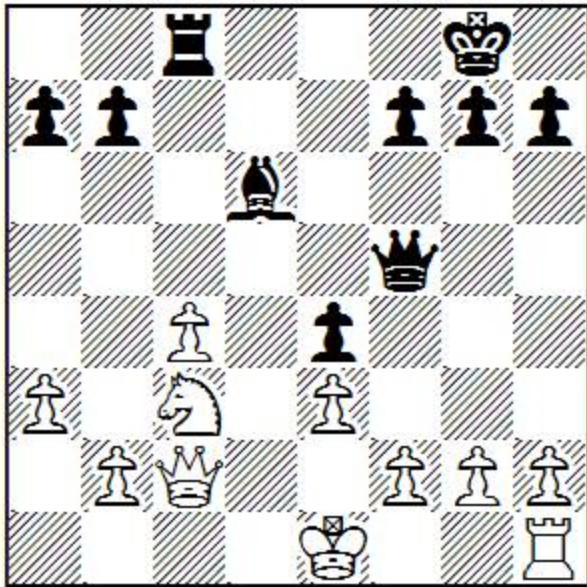
In the words of Korchnoi, 'White must be careful – after 21 Nxf5 Rxd5 22 Nxd5 Qxf5 23 Qb3 Qe5 24 g3 (24 a4!?) 24 ... b5! 25 Qxb5 Rb8 26 Qd7 Qxb2 27 0-0 Qxa3 he would have lost nearly all his advantage.' But 28 Qg4! would have won the e4-pawn. In addition, 22 cxd5! Qxf5 23 0-0 is possible, forcing Black to suffer a pawn down either with the queens on – 23 ... Qe5 24 g3 (in the event of 24 ... Bxa3 25 Qb3! Bxb2? 26 Na4! Bc1(a1) 27 Qxb7 the outcome is again decided by the passed d-pawn), or without the queens – 23 ... Qxd5 24 Rd1 Qe5 25 g3 Bf8 26 Qxe4 Qxe4 27 Nxe4 f5 (27 ... Rc2 28 Rd8) 28 Ng5 Be7 29 Nf3 Bf6 30 b4 etc.

Even so, in connection with the note to the next move, 21 Rxe5! gives White good winning chances.

21 ... Qxe5 22 Nxf5?!

Dvoretsky's suggestion was stronger: 22 f4! Qf6 (22 ... Qc5 23 Na4 is no better, while 22 ... exf3? 23 Nxf5 is simply incorrect) 23 Nxe4 Bxe4 (23 ... Qg6 24 Nf6+ Qxf6 25 Qxf5) 24 Qxe4 Rxc4 25 0-0 with a great advantage to White.

22 ... Qxf5



23 0-0

'Psychologically understandable: I was tired of playing with my king in the centre, and I decided to return the pawn, but to complete my development, hoping subsequently to exploit the tactical weaknesses in Black's position – e4, b7, d6 and the 8th rank,' writes Korchnoi, mentioning 23 Qxe4? Qxe4 24 Nxe4 Rxc4 25 Nc3 Bxa3 and offering a choice between:

1) the 'technical' 23 Qb3 – but here, in my view, after 23 ... Qc5! 24 0-0 Qxc4 25 Qxb7 Rb8 26 Qxa7 Rxb2 27 Qd7 Bf8! (27 ... Bxa3 28 Qe8+ Bf8 29 Nxe4 is not so clear) 28 Nd5 Ra2 Black has good chances of saving the game;

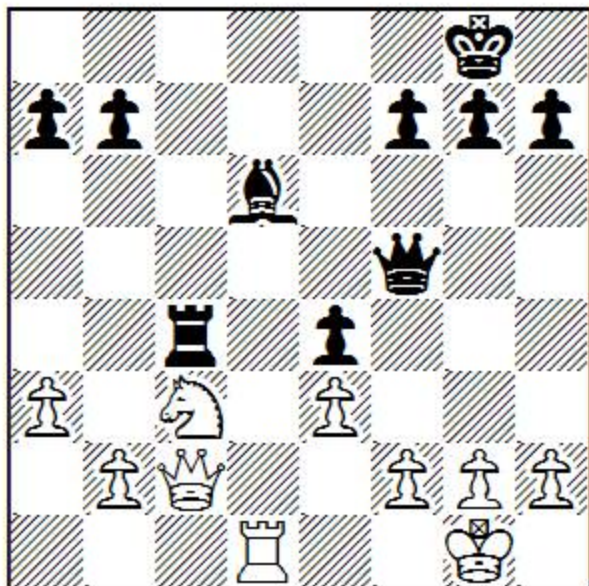
2) the 'strong' 23 Nxe4, and if 23 ... b5, then 24 0-0 Rxc4 (I think that 24 ... Bf8 25 b3! Bxa3 26 Ra1 is bad for Black) 25 Qd2, 'retaining a healthy extra pawn'. But, according to Dvoretsky, after 25 ... Bc7 26 Ng3 Qe6 27 Rd1 g6! 'the activity of Black's pieces largely

compensates for his slight material deficit'. 25 Qd1!? is more cunning, with the idea of 25 ... Bc7 26 Ng3 Qe6(e5) 27 Qf3.

Korchnoi chose perhaps the best and definitely the most venomous continuation: the opponent is able to regain his pawn and it appears that a draw is now inevitable, but ...

23 ... Rxc4 24 Rd1

Not 24 Qb3?! Qc8.



24 ... Qe5?!

Up till now, and then up to the 38th move, Karpov resourcefully sought counter-chances after his risky opening novelty. But this move was generally condemned.

Tal recommended 24 ... Be7. Indeed, after 25 Rd4 Rxd4 26 exd4 Qg5! (26 ... Bf6 27 Nxe4, and 27 ... Bxd4? is not possible on account of 28 Nf6+! Kholmov) 27 Nxe4 Qd5 it is not easy for White to convert his pawn advantage: 28 Qd3 Qa2 or 28 Qa4 Bxa3!, while if 28 Ng3 (Korchnoi), then 28 ... g6 (Dvoretsky) 29 Qe4?! (29 Ne2 is better) 29 ... Qxe4 30 Nxe4 f5 and ... Kf7-e6-d5 with a draw. But a move earlier 27 g3! is more methodical, with the idea of 27 ... e3 (27 ... f5? 28 Qb3+ and Qxb7) 28 f4! Qg4 29 Qe4 and wins (Kholmov), or 27 ... Bf8 28 Kg2! b6 (28 ... e3 29 Qc1) 29 h4, winning the e-pawn in comfort.

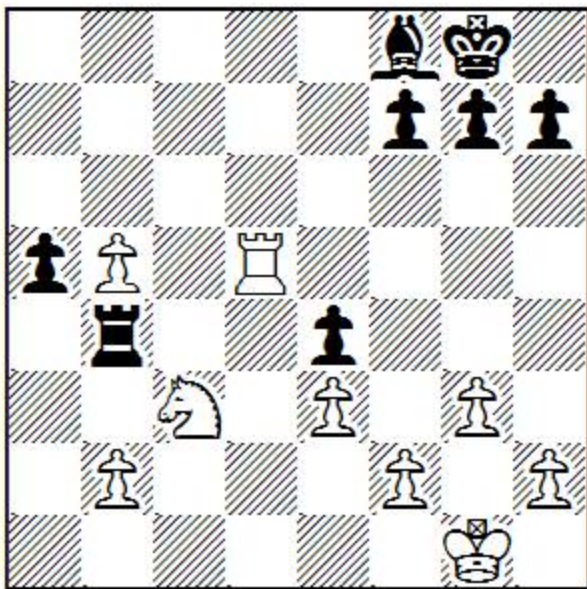
Korchnoi considered the best defence to be 24 ... Bf8 25 Rd8 (25 Rd4?! is unfavourable: 25 ... Rxd4 26 exd4 Qg5 27 Nxe4 Qd5 28 Qd3

Qa2 etc.) 25 ... g6 26 Qd1 Kg7 27 h3 'with some advantage to White'. Alas, 27 Rd4 Qc8 28 Rxe4 does not work on account of 28 ... Bxa3! Therefore, in my view, 26 Qd2! is more accurate, and if 26 ... Kg7, then 27 Rd4!, winning the e4-pawn, while after 26 ... Qe5 27 Ra8 Kg7 (27 ... a6? 28 Qd8) 28 Rxa7 White is again a pawn up, although after 28 ... Qd6 29 Qxd6 Bxd6 it is still possible to fight for a draw.

25 g3 (now Qb3 is threatened) 25 ... a6 26 Qb3 b5 (26 ... Rc7 27 Nxe4 or, according to taste, 27 Qd5) 27 a4!

It unexpectedly transpires that, because of the weakness of his back rank and the vulnerability of his rook and bishop, Black loses a pawn. He has to choose the lesser evil.

27 ... Rb4! (if 27 ... Rc5, then 28 axb5 axb5 29 Qa2! Bf8 30 Rd8 Qe7 31 Qa8 f5 32 Rb8 Qd6 33 Kg2 and wins) 28 Qd5 Qxd5 29 Rxd5 Bf8 30 axb5 a5! (avoiding 30 ... axb5 31 Rxb5)



31 Rd8

'In this position Bent Larsen suggested 31 b6 Rxb6 32 Rxa5 Rxb2 33 Nxe4, when he reckons (*and justifiably* – G.K.) that White has good winning chances. As for myself, I believe in the strength of a passed pawn!' (Korchnoi)

31 ... Rxb2 32 Ra8 f5

After 32 ... Rb3 White wins by 33 Nd5 f5 (33 ... g6 34 Rxa5 Bc5 35 b6! Bxb6 36 Ra8+ and Rb8) 34 Rxa5 Kf7 35 b6 Bd6 (35 ... Ke6 36

Nc7+!) 36 Ra7+ Ke6 37 Nc7+ Bxc7 38 Rxc7! (Korchnoi) 38 ... Rxb6 39 Rxg7. 32 ... a4 33 Rxa4 Rb3 34 Rc4 g6 35 Rc6 Bg7 36 Rc8+ Bf8 37 g4! is also hopeless (Dvoretsky).

33 Rxa5 Bb4 34 Ra8+ Kf7

The rook at b2 is ideally placed: it hinders the advance of the passed b-pawn and attacks the f2-point. At first sight it would appear that in this endgame Black has more chance of drawing than White of winning. But the challenger shows that this is not so.

35 Na4

Driving the rook off the 2nd rank and ensuring the advance of the b-pawn. In Korchnoi's words, 'A knight on the edge of the board stands badly – all players, including grandmasters, know this. But White's primary objective is to prevent an attack on his f2-pawn by the rook from b2 and bishop from e1!'

After 35 Nd5?! White would have had to reckon with both 35 ... Be1 36 Kf1 Rb1! (Dvoretsky), and 35 ... Bc5 36 Rb8 g5. However, in Dvoretsky's opinion, it would have been very strong to interpose the check 35 Ra7+!, since if 35 ... Kf6, then 36 Nd5+ Kg6 37 b6 Be1 38 b7 is now decisive, while after 35 ... Ke6(g6) the move 36 Na4! achieves far greater effect.

35 ... Rb1+ 36 Kg2 Bd6 37 Ra7+ Kf6 38 b6 Bb8?!

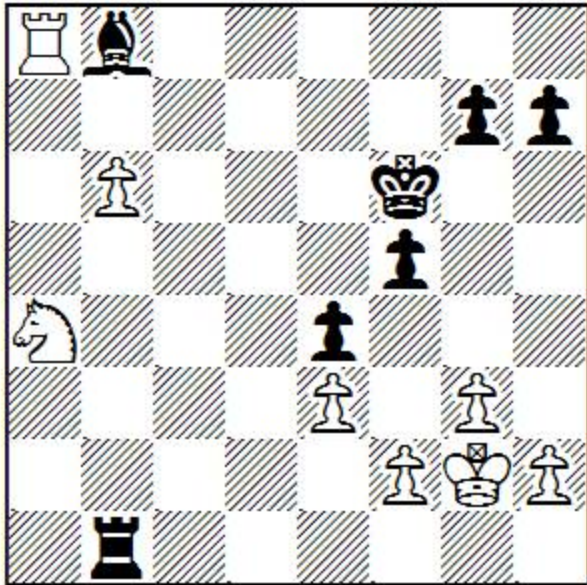
After 38 ... h5 (Kholmov) White would have won by 39 Nc3 Rb3 40 Nd5+ Ke6 41 Nf4+! Bxf4 42 gxf4 g6 43 b7 and Kg3-h4-g5 (Timman).

'38 ... Rb4 was better,' comments Korchnoi. 'In this case White could have moved his king across to the queenside – 39 Kf1, or resorted to tactics, beginning with 39 Nc3.' And concluding with the variation 39 ... Rb3 40 Nd5+ Ke5 41 Nc7 Bxc7 42 bxc7 (here 42 Rxc7 Rxb6 43 Rxg7 is insufficient on account of 43 ... h6) 42 ... Rc3 43 c8Q Rxc8 44 Rxg7 Rh8 with drawing chances (for example, 45 f4+ exf3+ 46 Kxf3 Kf6 47 Ra7 h6 48 Ra6+ Kg7 etc.).

Possibly, Karpov rejected 38 ... Rb4 because of 39 Kf1 – he did not want to allow the white king to escape. However, the path to the queenside was a lengthy one, and during this time Black could also have brought up his king and tried to exploit the unfortunate position of the knight at a4. Whereas most probably after 38 ... Bb8 his position is objectively lost.

39 Ra8!

After Panno's move 39 Rc7!? Dvoretsky advises 39 ... h5!?



39 ... Be5?!

Defending against Nc3-d5, but allowing Nc5. Many recommended the more tenacious 39 ... Bd6, for example:

1) 40 Ra6 Ke5! (but not 40 ... Ke6 41 b7 Kd7 42 Nb6+ Kc7 43 Nc4 Be7 44 Na5 Bd6 45 Ra8 Kd7 46 Rg8 and wins – Korchnoi), and now not 41 Ra7 Rb4 42 Nc3 on account of 42 ... Rxb6! (after 42 ... Rb3, Korchnoi's move, 43 Ra5+ Ke6 44 Nb5 is strong) 43 Rxc7 Rb3 44 Ne2 Rb2 45 Nd4 Bc5 46 Rxc7 Bxd4 47 exd4+ Kxd4 with a probable draw, but immediately 41 Nc3! Rb3 (if 41 ... Rb4(2) 42 Ra5+ Ke6, then 43 Rb5!) 42 Ra5+ Ke6 43 Nb5 Be5 44 b7, planning, by giving up the b-pawn, to gather a pawn harvest on the kingside: 44 ... Kd7 45 b8Q Bxb8 46 Nd4 Rb7 47 Rxf5, or 44 ... Rb2 45 b8Q Bxb8 46 Nd4+ Ke7 47 Nxf5+, and the weakness of the e4-pawn causes Black's downfall;

2) 40 Nc3 Rb3 41 Nd5+ Ke6 (41 ... Ke5?! 42 Nc7!) 42 Nc7+ Kd7 43 Ne8 g6 44 Nxd6 Kxd6 45 Rb8 Kc6, and here Timman gave 46 h4, but Dvoretsky refuted it by 46 ... Rxb6 47 Rxb6+ Kxb6 48 g4 fxg4 49 Kg3 Kc5 50 Kf4 Kd5 51 Kxg4 Kc4! with a draw, and suggested 46 g4! fxg4 47 Kg3 Rb5 (47 ... Rb2 48 b7! h5 49 Rg8 Kxb7 50 Rxc6 etc.) 48 Kxg4 Rf5 49 Kg3 Rf3+ 50 Kg2 Rf7 51 Rc8+ Kxb6 52 Re8 with good winning chances.

In the game it all proved simpler: the white pawn quickly reached b7, where it was defended by the knight from c5, and the rook gained

the opportunity to launch a raid into the opponent's rear.

40 Nc5! Bd6 41 b7 Ke7 42 Rg8 Be5 (42 ... Kf7 43 Rd8 or 42 ... g6 43 Na6! was worse) **43 f4!**

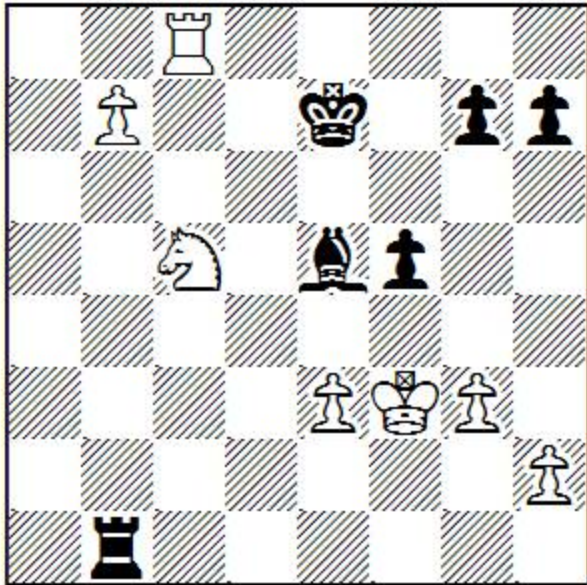
The sealed move, which includes the king in the game. The adjourned position is already, of course, technically won for White, although he still has to avoid a number of pitfalls, involving threats to his b7-pawn (i.e. an attack on the knight at c5 by the bishop and the rook from b5). On the resumption, which took place the following day, Karpov put up a desperate resistance.

43 ... exf3+ 44 Kxf3 Kf7 45 Rc8

'According to my adjournment analysis, the manoeuvre 45 Rd8 Ke7 46 Rd7+ Ke8 (46 ... Kf6? 47 Rd5! Bc7 48 Na6 Rxb7 49 Rd7) 47 Rd5 Bb8 48 Rxf5 would have won a second pawn, but only temporarily. After 48 ... Ba7! the b-pawn is lost. I wanted more!' (Korchnoi). However, after 49 Re5+! Kf7 50 Ne6! Kf6 51 Ra5 Rxb7 52 Nd8 and Ra6+ (Dvoretsky) Black is in trouble, and therefore 48 ... Bd6! 49 Ne4 Be7 (Tal) is correct, with drawing chances.

On the other hand, 47 e4! (instead of 47 Rd5) is stronger, when after 47 ... Rb5 White wins by both 48 exf5 Rxc5 49 Rxg7 h6 (Keene admitted that this position bothered their team during analysis) 50 f6! Kf8 (50 ... Bd6 51 f7+ Kf8 52 Rg6 etc.) 51 Re7 Bd6 52 Rd7 Be5 53 Ke4 Rb5 54 Kf5 Bc7+ 55 Kg6 Rxb7 56 Rh7 Ke8 57 Kxh6 (Dvoretsky), as well as Timman's 48 Rd5! fxe4+ (48 ... Bb8 49 exf5 Ba7 50 f6! gxf6 51 Ne4 Rb3+ 52 Kg2! Ke7 53 Rh5 or 52 ... Rb2+ 53 Kh3 Bb8 54 Nxf6+) 49 Kxe4 Bb8 50 Kd3 Ba7 51 Kc4 Rb6 (51 ... Rb2 52 Nb3) 52 Ne4! Bb8 53 Rb5 etc.

45 ... Ke7



46 h3!

‘This cunning move escaped the attention of the Soviet experts.’ (Korchnoi). The frontal 46 e4, suggested by Tal, was also possible, for example:

1) 46 ... g6?! 47 Nd3 fxe4+ 48 Kxe4 Bxg3 (after 48 ... Bd6 49 Rh8 Kd7 50 Rxh7+ Kc6 51 Rg7 White is simply two pawns up) 49 hxg3 Rxb7 50 Nc5 (creating domination with a small army) 50 ... Rb1 51 Ke5 Re1+ 52 Ne4 and the rest is a matter of technique.

2) 46 ... fxe4+ 47 Kxe4 Bd6 48 Kd5 (forcibly transposing into a theoretical endgame with rook and two pawns against bishop and two pawns) 48 ... Bxc5 (48 ... Rb5? 49 Re8+!) 49 b8Q Rxb8 50 Rxb8 Bg1 51 h3 Kf7 (Timman), and a lengthy conversion process still lies ahead.

But after home analysis Korchnoi came to the conclusion that he could manage without having to demonstrate his knowledge of a technical ending (where the win for White is by no means simple and will slip away after the slightest error), and he made a move which does not spoil anything, prepares g3-g4 and gives the opponent an opportunity to declare his intentions.

46 ... h5?!

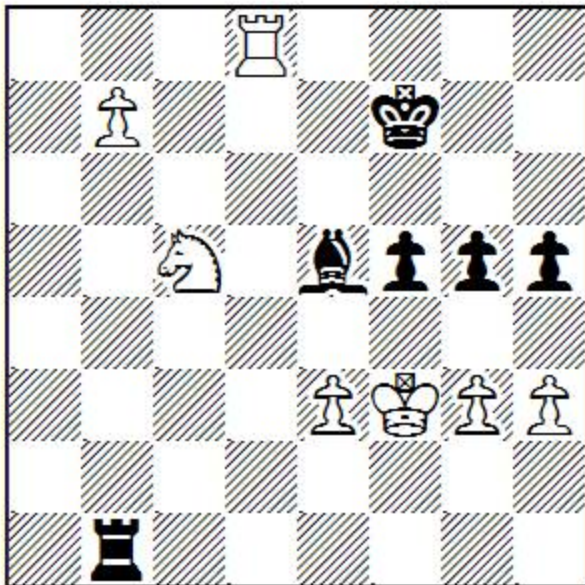
A weakening. However, even a more tenacious defence would not have helped, for example:

1) 46 ... g6 47 g4 Rb5 48 gxf5 gxf5 49 Nd3 Bd6 50 Rh8 (Dvoretsky), or 47 ... fxg4+ 48 Kxg4! followed by Kf3 and wins (Larsen);

2) 46 ... Rb5 47 g4 fxg4+ 48 hxg4 Bd6 49 Ke4 h6 (49 ... g6? 50 g5!) 50 Kd3 Rb4! 51 e4 Be5! (Andersson) 52 Rg8! and Black is in zugzwang: 52 ... Rd4+ 53 Ke2! Rb4 54 Nd3, or 52 ... Kf7 53 Rd8 Ke7 54 Rd7+ Ke8 55 Rd5 Bf6 56 e5 Be7 57 Rd4! Rb5 58 Ra4! Bxc5 59 Ra8+ Kf7 60 b8Q and wins (analysis by Dvoretsky).

47 Rg8! (a subtle manoeuvre, forcing Black to allow the rook to go to d8) 47 ... Kf7 48 Rd8 g5

The last practical chance. 48 ... Ke7 49 Rd7+ Ke8 50 Rd5 is bad, since the h5-pawn will come under fire.



49 g4!

An accurate way of converting the advantage. 49 Nd3?! g4+! 50 hxg4? (50 Kg2! Ke7 51 Rd5 is correct – Dvoretsky) 50 ... hxg4+ 51 Kf2 Ke7! 52 Nxe5 Kxd8 53 b8Q+ Rxb8 54 Nc6+ Kc7 55 Nxb8 Kxb8 56 e4 Kc7! (Tal) or 52 Rd5 Bb8! 53 Rxf5 Rxb7 54 Rg5 Rb3! 55 Nf4 Rb2+ 56 Ke1 Kf6 57 Rxc4 Kf5 58 Rg8 Ke4 would have led to a draw.

49 ... hxg4+ (49 ... fxg4+ 50 hxg4 h4 51 Nd7 and b8Q was clearly bad) 50 hxg4 Ke7 (50 ... Kf7 51 Rc8! fxg4+ 52 Kxg4 Bd6 53 e4 Bf4 54 Kf5 Rf1 55 Nd7 Ke7 56 e5 and wins – Kholmov) 51 Rg8 fxg4+ 52 Kxg4 Kf7 (52 ... Bd6 53 Na6) 53 Rc8 Bd6 54 e4

Another passed pawn has begun advancing (the consequence of the undermining move g3-g4!) and the fate of the game is decided.

54 ... Rg1+ (or 54 ... Kf6 55 b8Q Bxb8 56 Rxb8 Rxb8 57 Nd7+ Ke6 58 Nxb8 Ke5 59 Kf3 g4+ 60 Ke3 g3 61 Nc6+ Kd6 62 Nd4 and wins) 55 Kf5 g4 56 e5!

'Since Karpov did not resign, apparently hoping to prolong the game, I decided to conclude matters as quickly and as prettily as possible.' (Korchnoi)

56 ... Rf1+ 57 Ke4 Re1+ 58 Kd5 Rd1+ (58 ... Bxe5 59 Nd3) 59 Nd3! Rxd3+ 60 Kc4 1-0

Black resigned, and the score became 4-2.

In the 22nd game (again a French Defence) things were heading for a draw, but the challenger made a serious mistake in time-trouble and lost a pawn. When the time control was reached, his position was completely hopeless. 'But, evidently, the "yoghurt" was too nutritious that day. Karpov continued playing like a wound-up machine (although he could have adjourned the game), made four weak moves in a row, and in the adjourned position the draw was not far off,' writes Korchnoi. In the 23rd game the advantage was on his side, but Karpov 'not without difficulty found a study-like defence' and gained a draw.

But in the 24th game Korchnoi successfully played the Open Variation of the Spanish (cf. *Game No.31*, note to Black's 9th move) and for the first time over a long period he gained an advantage with Black, but Karpov 'again managed to escape with a draw.' On the other hand, the champion could have won the 25th game, but he blundered in the opponent's traditional time-trouble and was forced to find a draw in the adjourned position. The draw in the 26th game was not so bloody.

Seeing how dispirited and disillusioned his opponent was, Korchnoi used his last strength to try and change the course of the match, but: 'Desperate play for a win can at any moment turn into failure, and in the 27th game (in my opinion, one of the weakest in the match) this finally happened.' I should mention Korchnoi's important novelty in what was considered a harmless variation of the English Opening – 1 c4 e5 2 Nc3 Nf6 3 Nf3 Nc6 4 g3 Bb4 5 Nd5 Nxd5 6 cxd5 Nd4 7 Nxd4 exd4 8 Qc2! with the better position for White. But Karpov managed to equalise and then when, in pursuit of the mirage of an advantage, his opponent made a series of inaccuracies, he seized the initiative and won.

The score become 5-2, and Karpov only had to win one more game. But here the match entered its most intriguing phase. 'The Gods on Mount Olympus have abandoned their child and drawn attention to an outcast ... Karpov's play wasn't working, something had broken down in his splendid chess motor. The almost classical style of the artist not only lost its usual brilliance – it simply became deformed under the weight of that pressure exerted on it by the "collective": the refined technique became blunt, and the computer-like forecasting was replaced by yawning gaps. The masses began to devour the creator.' (from an article by Emmanuel Sztein, Korchnoi's future press attaché).

In the 28th game the Open Variation of the Ruy Lopez again passed its endurance test. The revival of this variation in the 1980s-1990s is largely associated with the name of Korchnoi, who upheld it both in Baguio, and three years later in Merano. And although in the 14th and 18th games of the match in Merano White was able to gain important wins (*Game Nos.85 and 86*), Korchnoi's ideas did not lose their topicality, and some of his suggestions are still the main lines today.

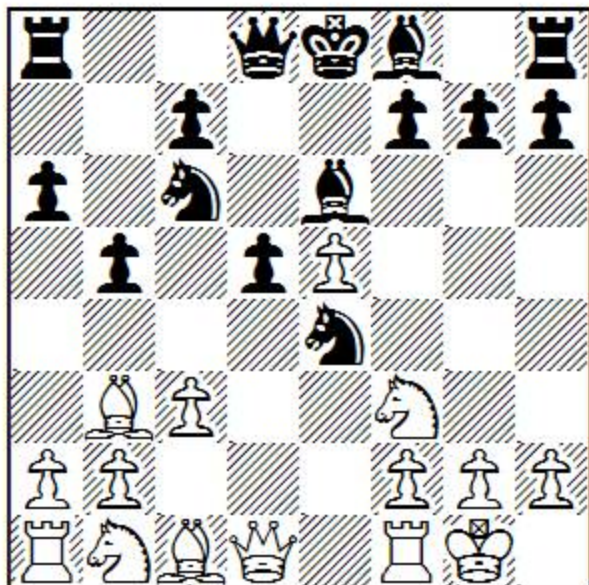
Game 31

A.Karpov-V.Korchnoi

World Championship Match, Baguio 1978, 28th game

Ruy Lopez C82

1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bb5 a6 4 Ba4 Nf6 5 0-0 Nxe4 6 d4 b5 7 Bb3 d5 8 dxe5 Be6 9 c3



9 ... Nc5

At that time this was a comparatively little-studied line. After the 14th game Korchnoi temporarily avoided 9 ... Bc5 (*Game Nos.35 and 75*). And the 24th went 9 ... Be7 10 Bc2 Nc5 11 h3 0-0 12 Re1 Qd7 13 Nd4 Nxd4 14 cxd4 Nb7 15 Nd2 c5 16 dxc5 Nxc5 17 Nf3 with a slight advantage for White, which, however, was quickly neutralised.

10 Bc2 Bg4 11 Re1 Be7 12 Nbd2 Qd7 13 Nb3

A natural plan, but not the most forceful, which can also be said about 13 h3 Bh5 14 Nf1 Rd8 15 Ng3 Bg6 16 Nd4 0-0!? 17 Bf5 Ne6 18 Bg4 Ncxd4 19 cxd4 c5 20 Nf5 Qa7! 21 Nxe7+ Qxe7 22 Be3 cxd4 23 Bxd4 Rc8 ... 0-1 (Hübner-Korchnoi, Tilburg 1986).

As it later transpired, 13 Nf1! is more energetic: 13 ... Rd8 14 Ne3 Bh5 15 b4! (after 15 Nf5 0-0 16 Nxe7+ Nxe7 in 1987 Korchnoi won with Black against Y.Gruenfeld, A.Sokolov and Marjanovic) 15 ... Ne6, and here White has played both 16 Nf5 0-0 17 a4 (Balashov-Portisch, Moscow 1981) or 16 ... d4?! 17 Be4! (Hjartarson-Korchnoi, 1st matchgame, Saint John 1988), and 16 g4 Bg6 17 Nf5 0-0 18 a4 Rfe8 19 axb5 axb5 20 Bd3 Rb8 21 Qe2 Ncd8 22 Ra5! with appreciable pressure (Khalifman-Marin, Istanbul Olympiad 2000).

13 ... Ne6

13 ... Nxb3?! 14 axb3 is weaker, as is 13 ... 0-0 14 Nxc5 Bxc5 15 b4 Bb6 16 Qd3 g6 17 Bh6 Rfe8 18 a4. 'Black is deliberately refraining

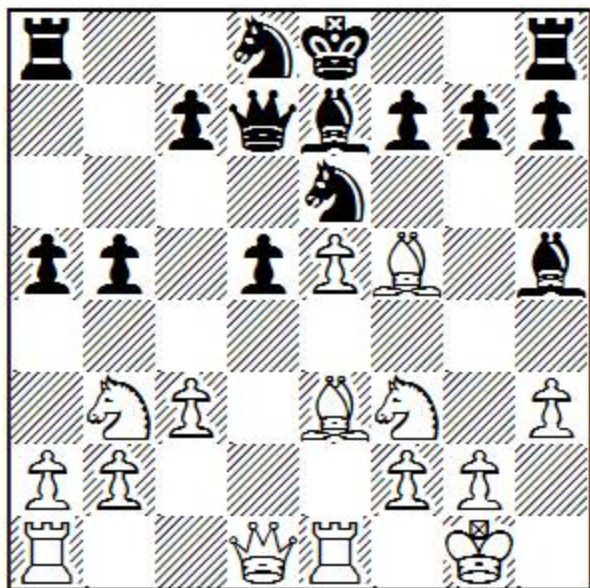
from castling; the rook on h8 will have its say.' (Tal)

14 h3 (14 Qd3 Bh5! 15 Nfd4 Bg6 with equality, Schmid-Korchnoi, London 1979) 14 ... Bh5 15 Bf5 (fighting for the central squares) 15 ... Ncd8

A novelty. Previously 15 ... Rd8?! 16 a4! had occurred, but later 15 ... Bg6!? was successfully employed (Nunn-Tal, Naestved 1985; Leko-Piket, Wijk aan Zee 2000).

16 Be3 a5

A typical advance: Black wants to seize space on the queenside with gain of tempo (... a5-a4). 16 ... Nb7 with the idea of ... c7-c5 is also interesting (Sigurjonsson-Stean, Munich 1979). 'Karpov was ready for this and was intending to reply 17 Nbd2 c5 18 Nf1.' (Tal)



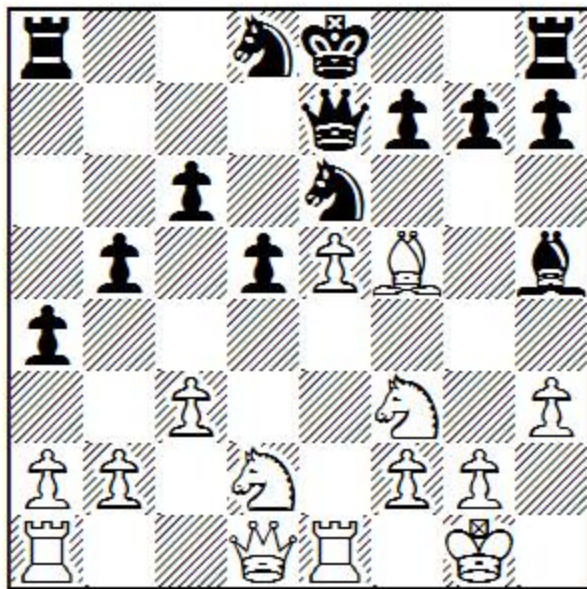
17 Bc5

Tal explained this sensible move as being due to the champion relaxing after his fifth win in the preceding game and by a desire to avoid complications. But is there anything better? According to Flohr, '17 a4 could have greatly activated things', but after 17 ... bxa4 White has no advantage: 18 Nbd2 Bg6, 18 Nbd4 c5, or 18 Nc5 Bxc5 19 Bxc5 g6 20 Bxe6 Nxe6 21 Be3 Bxf3 22 Qxf3 0-0 with equality. Little is also promised by 17 Nc5 Bxc5 18 Bxc5 Bg6 19 Bg4 h5 20 Bxe6 Nxe6 21 Be3 c5 (Zarnicki-Sorokin, Villa Gesell 1996).

17 ... a4 18 Bxe7 Qxe7 19 Nbd2

But this is indeed the result of relaxation. 'White would like to play knight more actively with his knight, but in the event of 19 Nbd4 Nxd4 20 cxd4 Ne6 Black quickly sets up counterplay against the central pawn.' (Tal). After 21 Qc2 0-0! 22 Bxh7+ Kh8 23 g4 Bg6! 24 Bxg6 fxg6 this is so. But, as games from the end of the century showed, after 21 g4 Bg6 22 Rc1 White has somewhat the better chances. Therefore also after 19 Nbd4! (the only way to fight for an advantage) they began playing 19 ... c6.

19 ... c6



Thus White has not succeeded in gaining firm control of the c5-square and Black has solved his opening problems. Moreover, he can now think about gradually seizing the strategic initiative. Korchnoi's plan has fully justified itself!

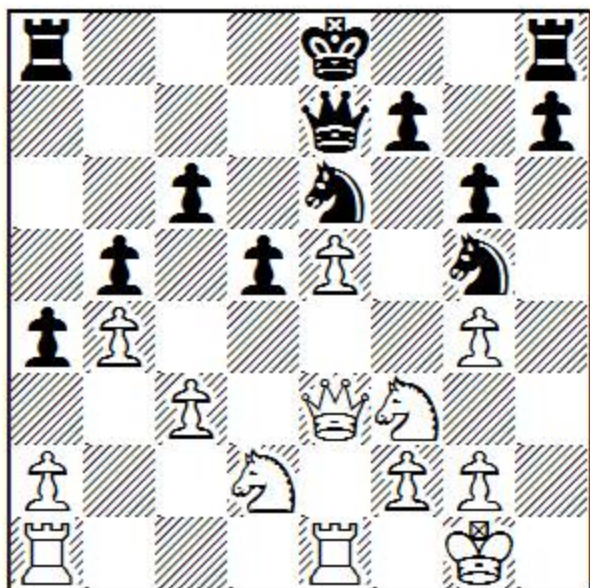
20 b4

A quite reasonable move, although, according to Flohr, it denies White the possibility of play on the queenside and weakens the c4-square, which will be important in the endgame (the threat of ... d5-d4). 'Karpov did not evaluate his position very optimistically,' explained Tal. 'Meanwhile, the simple 20 Qc2 would have allowed him to play on without any risk.'

20 ... Ng5 (in order, after the exchange of a pair of minor pieces, to remain with a knight against a bishop) 21 Qe2 g6 22 Bg4?!

One doesn't like to attach a question mark here, but objectively this is a mistake. 'The champion apparently "believed" his opponent. After the retreat of the bishop to d3 or c2 he would have retained an excellent position. Black's pawn majority on the queenside is static – the advance of any of the pawns automatically activates the bishop.' (Tal). And indeed, after 22 Bd3! Nde6 23 Qe3 Bxf3 24 Nxf3 Nxf3+ 25 Qxf3 (Filip) White is alright.

22 ... Bxg4 23 hxg4 Nde6 24 Qe3



24 ... h5!

Exploiting the position of the rook at h8. In a good position, as Tal put it, 'Black can allow himself to play sharply, not only because his competitive situation argues against half-measures.'

25 Nxg5

If 25 Nh2 there can follow 25 ... hxg4 26 Nxg4 0-0-0 (Tal), and Black's king hides on the queenside, whereas White's faces difficulties on the h-file, or 25 ... Qa7, 'aiming for a better endgame' (Flohr).

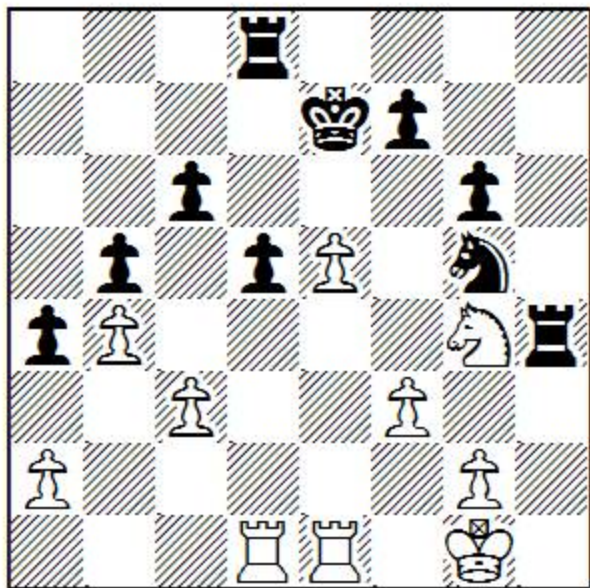
25 ... Qxg5 26 Qxg5 Nxg5 27 gxh5

'Perhaps in his preliminary calculations White had been relying on the active 27 f4?! Ne6 28 f5, but here he discovered that after 28 ... Ng7 he would be forced to make material or positional concessions.' (Tal). 28 ... Nf4 or 28 ... Ng5 also comes into consideration.

27 ... Rxh5 28 Nf1 Rh4 (a complicated ending has arisen with somewhat the better chances for Black, but, of course, with accurate play White must be able to hold the game) 29 Rad1 Ke7

Bringing up the king. 29 ... Ne4 was pointless in view of 30 Rd4! (Filip) 30 ... Rh6(7) 31 Re3 Ke7 32 f3.

30 f3 Ne6 31 Ne3 Rd8 (to support the ... d5-d4 breakthrough) 32 Ng4 Ng5 (32 ... Ng7!)



33 Ne3?!

'The attempt 33 Kf2?! would have been refuted by 33 ... Ne4+ 34 fxe4 Rxg4, when the rook ending is advantageous to Black. Karpov does not object to a repetition of moves, but 33 Rd4 was preferable, in order after 33 ... Ne6 to retreat 34 Rd2.' (Tal)

33 ... Ne6 (33 ... d4!?) 34 Ng4 Ng7!

'After repeating moves to gain time on the clock (as usual Korchnoi was in time-trouble), Black finds the best plan. Practically any rook ending is in his favour.' (Tal)

35 Ne3?! (White wrongly retreats – as all the commentators pointed out, 35 Kf2 was clearly better) 35 ... Nf5!

An excellent move, which was apparently underestimated by Karpov.

36 Nc2?!

'It is paradoxical, but despite the doubling of the pawns, the rook endgame is advantageous to Black. The variation 36 Nxf5+?! gxf5 37 Rd4 f4 38 g4 (38 Kf2 Ke6 is hopeless for White – G.K.) 38 ... Rdh8 39 Rxf4 Rh1+ 40 Kf2 R8h2+ 41 Kg3 Rxe1 42 Kxh2 Rxe5 clearly shows this. Here too White should have played 36 Ng4!? Karpov plays on his opponent's time-trouble, but Black finds the only resource, and a quite effective one.' (Tal)

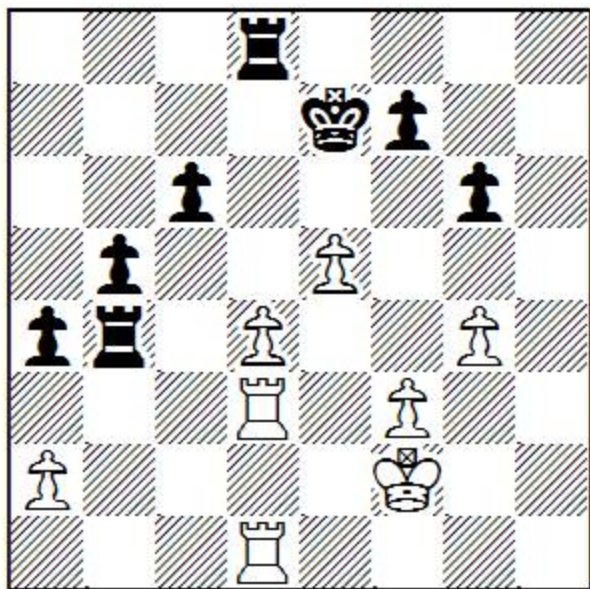
36 ... Rc4 ('How can one avoid remembering the move 20 b4? here,' sighs Flohr) 37 Rd3 d4!

Nevertheless breaking through in the centre. I think that Karpov underestimated this move too, since it involves a temporary pawn sacrifice.

38 g4 Ng7 39 Nxd4 (39 e6? Nxe6 40 Nxd4 Kf6 Tal) 39 ... Ne6 40 Red1

If 40 a3, then 40 ... Nf4!, for example: 41 Rde3 Nd5 42 Rd3 Nxc3 43 Ree3 Rdx4 with considerable winning chances.

40 ... Nxd4 41 cxd4 (41 Rxd4 Rdx4 42 cxd4 Rxb4 was even worse for White) 41 ... Rxb4 42 Kf2



Here the game was adjourned. White has got rid of his weakness at c3, but now the advance of Black's queenside pawns will be extremely dangerous for him.

42 ... c5!?

The sealed move. 'Throughout the match the challenger had been avoiding making over-committing continuations. On this occasion circumstances forced him to do this. There would appear to be an elementary win by 42 ... Rb2+ 43 R1d2 (43 R3d2? Rxd4) 43 ... Rxd2+ 44 Rxd2 Ke6 45 Ke3 c5, but after 46 f4! Rxd4 47 Rxd4 cxd4+ 48 Ke4! (but not 48 Kxd4? b4 49 Kc4 b3! 50 axb3 axb3 51 Kxb3 Kd5! – G.K.) the pawn ending turns out to be drawn in view of 48 ... b4 49 f5+, asserts Tal in the weekly 64, and after him Filip in *Informator*.

And Flohr in the magazine *Shakhmaty v SSSR* altogether buried the challenger, stating that 'in the event of 46 dxc5 (? – G.K.) 46 ... Rxd2 47 Kxd2 Kxe5 (?? – G.K.) 48 Kc3 Kd5 49 Kb4 Kc6 50 g5! White wins.' However, 47 ... Kd5! 48 f4 b4! produces directly the opposite result: 49 Kd3 Kxc5 50 f5 (50 Kd2 Kd4) 50 ... g5! 51 e6 fxe6 52 f6 Kd6 53 Kc4 b3 54 axb3 a3!, or 49 g5 Kxc5 50 f5 gxf5 51 e6 Kd6 52 exf7 Ke7 53 g6 f4 and Black wins.

This suggests the idea that after 46 f4 the immediate 46 ... b4! is stronger, since 47 dxc5? Rxd2 48 Kxd2 is bad on account of 48 ... Kd5! (see above). The rook endgame after 47 Ke4 f5+! 48 exf6 Kxf6 49 d5 b3 50 axb3 axb3 51 Rb2 Rb8 is also difficult for White, for example: 52 Kd3 Rb4 53 Kc3 (53 f5 g5) 53 ... Rxf4 54 Rxb3 Ke5, or 52 g5+ Ke7 53 Ke5 Kd7! 54 f5 (54 Rb1 Re8+! 55 Kf6 c4) 54 ... gxf5 55 g6 Re8+ 56 Kxf5 c4 57 g7 Kd6 58 Kf6 Rg8 and wins.

Taking into account the enormous fatigue after the sharp time scramble and five hours of tense play (as well as the two and a half months of match stress), it was impossible to calculate accurately all the variations at the board. And Korchnoi preferred another move, which also sets White unpleasant problems. This decision was not an easy one, and he made it only after lengthy and agonising hesitation. This is not surprising: a step away from defeat in the match, to allow the opponent to create a pair of mobile pawns in the centre! After writing down his move, he twice removed his score-sheet from the envelope in which it was to be sealed. As a result, for the next 14 moves on the resumption he had only 22 minutes left. However, this proved sufficient for victory ...

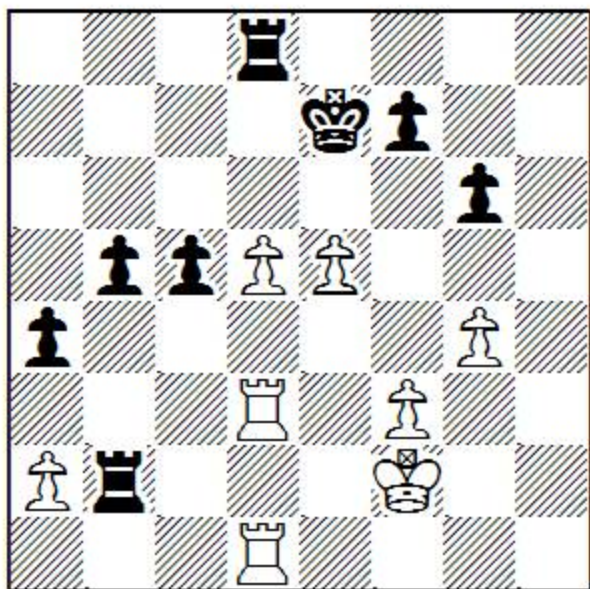
43 d5

After 43 dxc5 Rxd3 44 Rxd3 Rb2+ 45 Ke3 Rxa2 Black has an easily won rook endgame: 46 c6 Rc2 47 Rd5 Rxc6 48 Rxb5 Ra6 49 Rb2 a3 50 Ra2 g5. '43 Ke3 c4 is unpromising for White.' (Tal).

Therefore Karpov tries to create a counterattack, even at the cost of a pawn.

‘When I set off to the resumption, I was sure that with accurate play Karpov would be able to save the game. But in my time-trouble he continued playing at blitz speed and twice missed a certain draw,’ wrote Korchnoi in his book *Antichess*. However, after thorough analysis neither Karpov in Baguio, nor I more than quarter of a century later, have been able to find this ‘certain draw’ for White!

43 ... Rb2+



44 Kg3

44 R3d2 probably did not appeal to Karpov on account of 44 ... a3! 45 Ke3 b4 46 f4 c4, and Black's pawns are far more dangerous than White's: 47 f5 gxf5 48 gxf5 Rxd2 49 Rxd2 b3 50 f6+ Ke8 (the counterplay in the centre has clearly proved ineffective) 51 Kd4 b2 52 Rd1 c3 53 Kxc3 Rxd5 and wins. However, in the game too White's counterplay is too late.

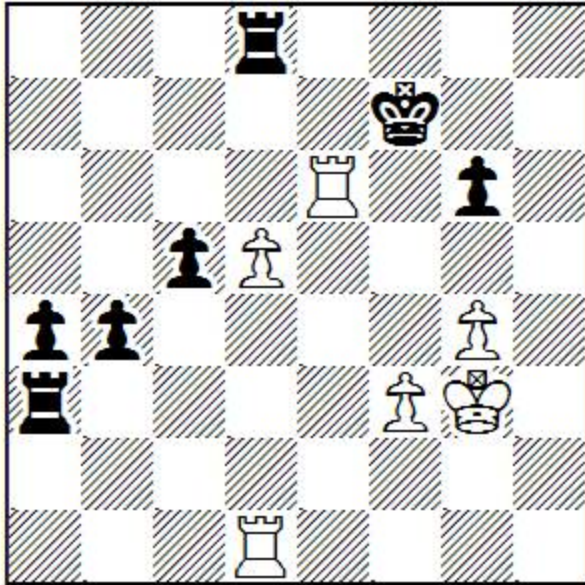
44 ... Rxa2 (the most forceful, although 44 ... g5 is also good, not allowing the opponent to create a mobile pawn chain) 45 Re3

‘It was this possibility that White was counting on, when sacrificing the pawn. Now lines are opened for the rook. This last move would appear to have come as a surprise to Korchnoi – out of his remaining twenty minutes he thought for ten.’ (Tal)

45 ... b4 46 e6 Ra3 47 Re2

47 Rxa3!? bxa3 48 exf7 (Filip) was perhaps the best chance, but even here after 48 ... Rb8! White is lost: 49 Kf4 a2, 49 Ra1(d3) Rb3, or 49 d6+ Kxf7 etc.

47 ... fxe6 48 Rxe6+ Kf7



49 Rde1

‘Both players were tired. After 49 g5 White would have retained the possibility of developing his initiative. Black might have been able to parry the attack, but at the least he would have had to fully mobilise himself.’ (Tal)

‘If Tal reproaches Karpov for the missed opportunity 49 g5, the question arises: was the position after 48 ... Kf7 really not reached by the trainers in their analysis of the adjourned position?!’, asks Flohr in surprise, and he suggests 49 ... Rd7, ‘after which the winning method for Black is similar to the continuation in the game.’ And not really so complicated: if, for example, 50 Rc6, then 50 ... b3! 51 Rxc5 b2 and wins.

49 ... Rd7!

Neutralising White’s threats. Black would have thrown away the win with 49 ... Rxd5? 50 Re7+ Kf8 (50 ... Kf6? 51 R1e6+ Kg5 52 Rg7 and wins – Filip) 51 Re8+ Kg7 52 R1e7+ Kh6 53 Rf7! Rad3 54 Kh4! g5+

55 Kg3 Rd6 56 Rh8+ Kg6 57 Rhh7, whereas now his queenside pawns are irresistible.

50 Rb6 (or 50 g5 Rd3) 50 ... Rd3 51 Ree6 R3xd5 52 Rxc6 a3 53 Rbf6+ Ke7 54 Re6+ Kf8 55 Ref6+ Ke7 56 Re6+ Kd8 57 Ra6 Rb7 58 Rg8+ Kc7 59 Rg7+ Rd7 60 Rg5 b3 61 Rxc5+ Kb8 0-1

White resigned, and the score became 5-3.

This was the champion's only loss in Baguio with the white pieces. 'Korchnoi played this game with great fervour,' commented Tal, while Baturinsky admitted: 'Karpov's loss in the 28th game was to some extent natural; it was Korchnoi's best game of the match.' As though the 21st had not occurred ...

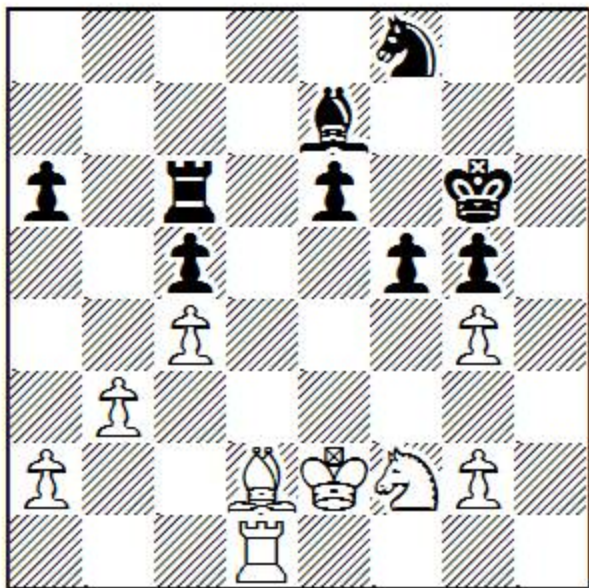
In the words of Karpov, he succeeded in tuning himself up for the next game, 'but unforeseen circumstances spoiled my fighting mood and forced me to "overheat" for too long in anticipation of the next clash.' An hour before the start of play, the organisers announced a technical postponement (on account of problems with the electricity supply), and two days later a last time-out was claimed by Korchnoi, 'who had allegedly got sun-burnt while bathing in the ocean', and who then recovered with the help of the yogis. For a month, without leaving the villa, 'they worked selflessly, strengthening his physical condition and fighting spirit.' Korchnoi was very happy with the yogis: 'With their appearance Zukhar began to wither literally before my eyes!'

As a result the 29th game was played only after an interval of a week. Its opening was not altogether usual: 1 c4 Nf6 2 Nc3 e6 3 e4!? (previously Korchnoi had played only 3 d4 or 3 Nf3) 3 ... c5 4 e5 Ng8 5 d4 cxd4 6 Qxd4 Nc6 7 Qe4 d6 8 Nf3 dxe5 9 Nxe5 Nf6 (not allowing the exchange of the bishop: 9 ... Bd7 10 Nxd7 Qxd7 11 Bg5 Geller-Filip, Gothenburg Interzonal 1955) 10 Nxc6 Qb6 11 Qf3 bxc6, and the weakness of the c-pawn condemned Black to a lengthy and unpleasant defence in a slightly inferior position. 'Again I was able to find a variation about which the world champion had no idea! He spent more than an hour on his first nine moves, but he was still unable to find a way to equalise,' writes Korchnoi. 'During the resumption, again in my time-trouble, he deviated from the correct course and lost.'

Game 32

V.Korchnoi-A.Karpov

World Championship Match, Baguio 1978, 29th game



47 ... Bd6?!

Six moves after the resumption, having gained equality, Karpov begins to commit inaccuracies. First, 'after 47 ... Nh7! 48 Nd3 Bd6 Black has no reason for complaint: 49 Bc3 Nf6 50 Be5 Ne4 51 Bxd6 Rxd6 52 Ne5+ Kg7!' (Tal), and second, 47 ... Bf6 or 47 ... Rd6 was also not bad.

48 Bc3 Nd7?

Tal and Filip pass over this move in silence, although it is after this that things become difficult for Black. 48 ... Rb6 49 Kf3! was also insufficient, but he could have defended by 48 ... Bc7! with the idea of ... Rd6.

49 gxf5+ exf5 50 g4! Nb6

50 ... Be5 (50 ... fxg4? 51 Ne4) is unfavourable: 51 Rxd7 Bxc3 52 gxf5+ Kxf5 53 Rd5+ Kf4 54 Nd3+ (Tal and Filip suggest 54 Nh3+, but here 54 ... Kg4 55 Nxg5 Bd4 56 Ne4 a5 is not altogether clear) 54 ... Kg4 55 Nxc5 etc.

51 Kf3 Be7 (51 ... Bc7 52 Re1!) 52 Ba5?!

Time-trouble. 52 Nd3! was very strong.

52 ... Rf6! 53 Kg2 fxg4

After 53 ... Nc8 (Filip), 54 Rd7 is possible, and if 54 ... fxg4, then 55 Rc7 Rf8 56 Nxg4 with good winning chances.

54 Nxg4 Re6 55 Kf3 Bf6 (55 ... Nc8 56 Rd5!?)

56 Nxf6! Rxf6+ 57 Kg4 Nc8?!

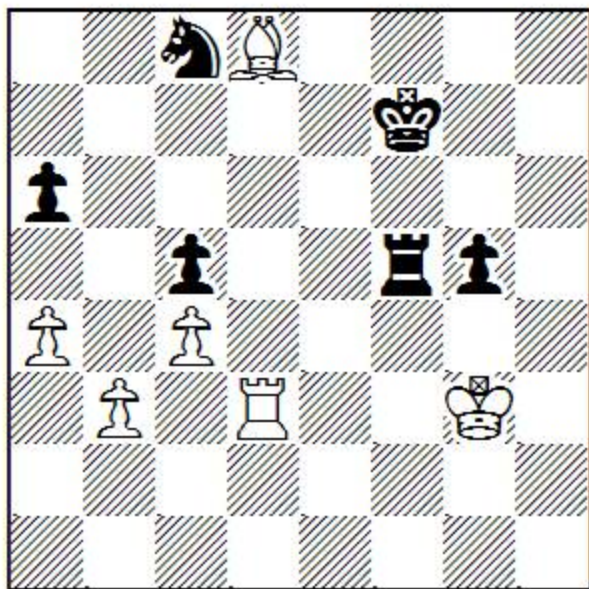
'57 ... Nxc4 58 bxc4 Rf4+ 59 Kg3 Rxc4 was the alternative defence, but for the moment Black does not need to take a risk.' (Tal). Especially since after 60 Rd2 Ra4 61 Bb6 c4 62 Kf3 c3 63 Rg2 or 62 ... g4+ 63 Ke3 he would probably have lost. But he should have included 57 ... Rf4+!, and only after 58 Kg3 replied 58 ... Nc8.

58 Bd8?! (58 Bc7! Ne7 59 Bd6 was more accurate, with an obvious advantage) 58 ... Rf4+ 59 Kg3 Rf5 (59 ... Rd4? 60 Rxd4 cxd4 61 Kg4 Nd6 62 Bxg5 and wins) 60 a4 Kf7?

'Perhaps the decisive mistake,' thinks Tal, who recommends 60 ... Re5 (after which, however, 61 Kg4 Re4+ 62 Kf3 Rf4+ 63 Ke3 is good) or 60 ... Rf7, which 'would still have retained possibilities of resisting: 61 Rd5 Rf5 62 Rd7 Rf7 63 Rxf7 Kxf7 64 Bxg5 Ke6 followed by ... Nb6-d7.'

61 Rd3?!

61 Bc7 or 61 Re1! looks more unpleasant for Black.



61 ... Re5?

61 ... Ne7? 62 Rd6! was also bad, but '61 ... Kg6 made sense' (Tal), after which White could have played 62 Rd7 or 62 a5 Re5 63 Kf3.

62 Kg4 Kg6 63 a5! Re4+ 64 Kf3 Rf4+ (or 64 ... Rh4 65 Rd5 etc.) 65 Ke3 Rh4 (65 ... Rf5 66 Ke4 g4 67 Bh4 and wins) 66 Rd5 Rh3+ 67 Kd2 Rxb3 68 Rxc5 Rb8 69 Rc6+ Kf5 70 Rxa6 g4 71 Rf6+ Ke4 72 Bc7 Rb2+ 73 Kc3 Rb7 74 Bh2 Rh7 75 Bb8 Rb7 76 Bg3 Rb1 77 Rf4+ Ke3 78 Rf8 Ne7 79 a6 1-0

Black resigned, and the score became 5-4!

In the 30th game Karpov played 1 c4 and after protracted manoeuvring an equal rook ending was reached. The game was adjourned, but not resumed: the contestants agreed a draw through the arbiter intermediary. Korchnoi: 'Oh, what went on in those days in the Soviet camp! High-ranking officials – Ivonin (the state boss of Soviet chess), the cosmonaut Sevastyanov (the, so to speak, social boss – the Chairman of the Federation) had already been for a long time in Baguio, impatiently awaiting the concluding banquet. But there was still no banquet! ...'

And then came the day of the memorable, long-suffering 31st game. The opening of it did not herald any play on a grand scale. After 1 c4 Karpov did not want to allow a repetition of the 29th game, and for the first time he replied 1 ... e6 2 Nc3 d5, while Korchnoi, for the first time in the entire history of meetings with his young opponent, employed the quiet Carlsbad Variation: 3 d4 Nf6 4 cxd5 exd5 5 Bg5 Be7 6 e3 0-0 7 Bd3 Nbd7 8 Nf3 Re8 9 Qc2 c6 10 0-0 Nf8 11 Bxf6 Bxf6 12 b4 Bg4 13 Nd2 Rc8 14 Bf5 Bxf5 15 Qxf5 Qd7 16 Qxd7 Nxd7 17 a4 Be7 18 Rfb1 Nf6 19 a5!? (in words of Tal, it was this 'questionable move which in the end brought White success') 19 ... a5 20 Na4 etc.

Yes, Korchnoi abandoned the traditional minority attack b2-b4-b5, rightly assuming that Black would parry it by ... c6-c5. Instead of this he chose a rare, unusual plan – he fixed the queenside pawns, gaining a powerful outpost at c5 for his knight and the possibility of preparing a breakthrough in the centre by e3-e4. A similar plan occurred in the game Andersson-Kasparov (2nd matchgame, Belgrade 1985), except that there the queens were still on the board and e3-e4 led to double-edged play. But in the endgame the white king can go to d3, whereas Black's does not have such a good post in the centre – and in the end this factor proves virtually decisive!

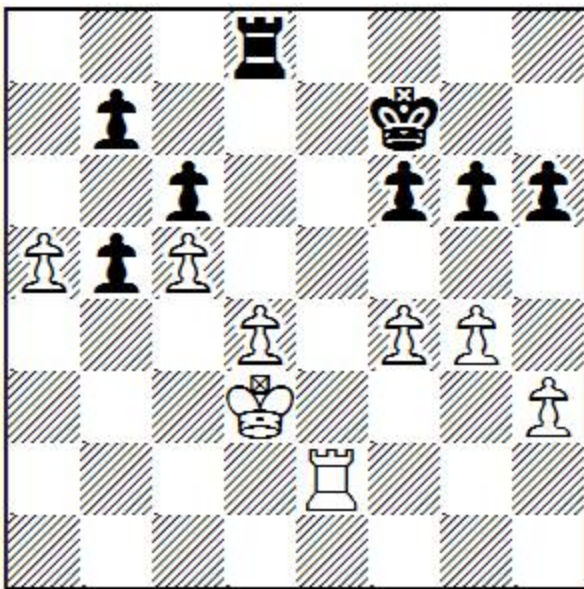
Korchnoi made the correct psychological reckoning that unhurried manoeuvring with the impending strategic threat of e3-e4 would be the most unpleasant for his opponent. Of course, Karpov wanted somehow to open up the position and achieve greater clarity, but he was obliged to wait ... Korchnoi played e3-e4 only after the time control, on the 41st

move! And Karpov, who had an enormous reserve of time, did not want to adjourn the game in an undetermined position, and he decided to try his luck: 'I replied within literally a few seconds. He made his 42nd move, and I immediately replied ...' As a result, exchanges took place, and by the time that the game was adjourned a difficult rook ending for Black had been reached.

Game 33

V.Korchnoi-A.Karpov

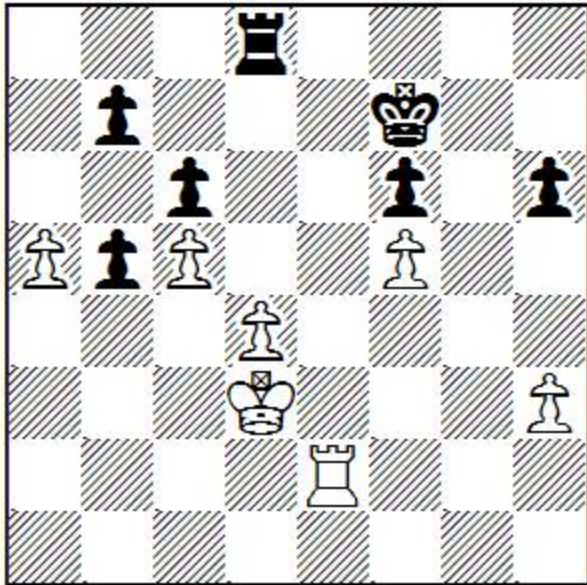
World Championship Match, Baguio 1978, 31st game



47 f5!

'The pawn duo at c5 and f5 greatly restricts the mobility of the black king. Here the game was adjourned and Karpov, taking the remaining time on his clock, sealed his next move. Analysis showed that Black's position was very dangerous. On the resumption (not for the first time) the unforeseen occurred. Initially the challenger missed a number of strongest continuations, but at the moment when the draw was close at hand, the champion made a serious error.' (Tal)

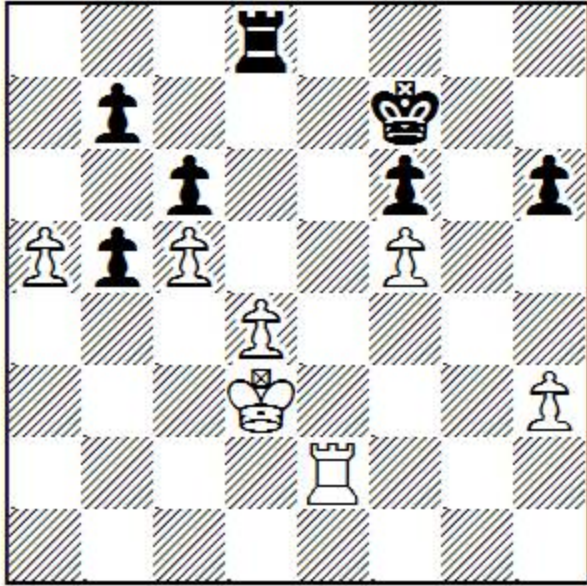
47 ... gxf5 48 gxf5



Now Black all the time has to reckon with the possible breakthroughs a5-a6 and d4-d5. But is White's advantage sufficient for a win? In his very interesting and high-quality book *Practical Rook Endings* (Olms 1999) Korchnoi devoted 21 pages to an analysis of this exceptionally complicated ending! And in the end he came to the conclusion that Black could nevertheless have defended. But I will venture to assert that *his position is already lost* (although, who knows, perhaps this verdict will also be disputed?).

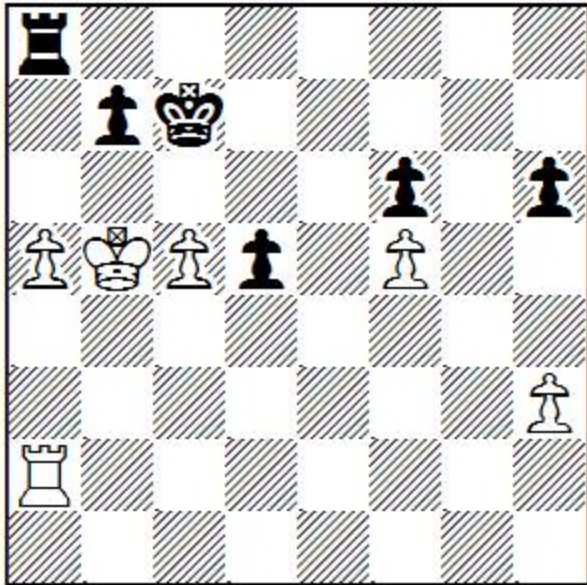
In my view, in certain supposedly drawn lines given by Korchnoi, White can gain a decisive advantage with subtle and unexpected play. For a start it is important to understand, and Korchnoi explains this well in his book, why in general White is playing for a win. In particular this is due to the difference in the placement of the kings: White's can become very active (both after the pawn sacrifice d4-d5 and Kd4, and after the manoeuvre to b4 followed by d4-d5 or a5-a6 and Ka5), whereas Black's is cramped by the f5- and c5-pawns, and the first check on the 7th rank will force it to retreat to the 8th. The sum of these positional factors allows White to go in for material sacrifices, since in some variations even one passed pawn suffices for a win: in view of the remoteness of Black's king, he is forced to give up his rook for it, and his counterplay is usually too late ...

Now let us see how events developed in this truly historic ending.



48 ... Rg8

'48 ... Ra8 was passive – after 49 Ra2 White would have played his king to b4, threatening the breakthroughs d4-d5 and a5-a6.' (Tal). There could have followed 49 ... Ke7 50 Kc3 Kd7 51 Kb4 Kc7 52 d5 cxd5 (after 52 ... Re8? 53 d6+ White has a decisive positional advantage, and Korchnoi convincingly demonstrates a win) 53 Kxb5



Analysis diagram

with the following main variations:

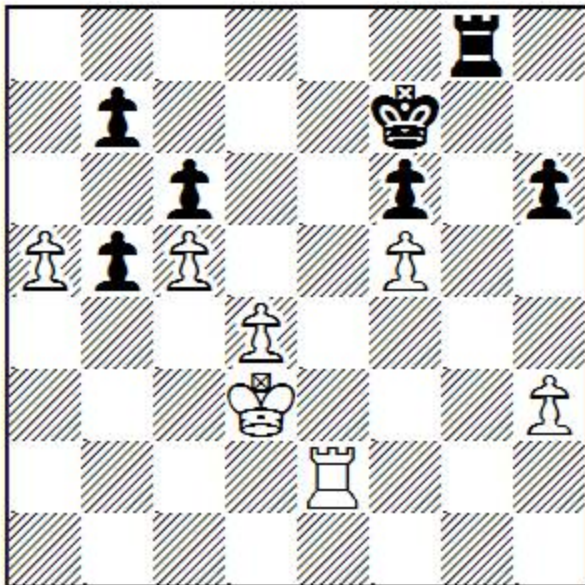
1) 53 ... d4 54 Re2 Rd8 55 Re7+ Kc8 56 Kb6 d3 57 Rc7+ Kb8 58 Rxb7+ Kc8 59 Rc7+ Kb8 60 a6 d2 61 Rb7+ Ka8 62 c6, or 54 ... Rg8 55 Re7+ Kc8 56 Kb6 (activity of the king!) 56 ... d3 57 c6! bxc6 58 a6 Kb8 59 Rd7 c5 60 Kxc5 (after all the pawn exchanges, White retains his highly important f5-pawn and his king simply goes to pick up material on the kingside) 60 ... Rg1 61 Rxd3 Rc1+ 62 Kb6 Rb1+ 63 Kc6 Ra1 64 Kd7 Rxa6 65 Ke7 Kc7 66 Rd7+ Kc8 67 Rd6 and wins (Korchnoi);

2) 53 ... Re8! (this is far more interesting) 54 Rg2! (Korchnoi's 54 a6 bxa6+ 55 Rxa6, hoping for 55 ... Re3? 56 Rc6+, does not win on account of 55 ... Rb8+! 56 Rb6 Rb7!, and if 57 Ka6, then 57 ... Rb8 58 Rxf6 d4 with an easy draw: 59 Rd6 d3 60 Rxd3 Kc6) 54 ... Re3 (54 ... Rd8? is weaker: 55 Rg6 Rd7 56 Rxf6 d4 57 Re6 d3 58 Re1 d2 59 Rd1 Rd4 60 f6 etc.) 55 Rg7+ Kb8 (if 55 ... Kc8 there follows 56 a6! bxa6+ 57 Kc6 Kb8 58 Kd6 d4 59 c6 Rc3 60 Rb7+ Kc8 61 Rf7 Kb8 62 Rxf6 d3 63 Kd7 and wins) 56 a6! (the only way!) 56 ... bxa6+, and White has two tempting continuations:

a) 57 Kc6!? (perhaps the stronger) 57 ... d4 58 Rg6 Rxh3 59 Rxf6 a5 60 Kd7, and the d-pawn is restrained by the rook from d6, after which the combined advance of the c- and f-pawns is decisive;

b) 57 Kxa6 Rxh3 (57 ... Rb3 58 Rf7) 58 Kb6 Rb3+ 59 Kc6 d4 60 Rf7 Ra3 (60 ... d3 61 Rxf6 d2 62 Rd6 Rf3 63 Rxd2 Rxf5 64 Kb6 Kc8 65 Ra2 and wins) 61 Rf8+ Ka7 62 Kd7 Ra5 63 c6 Rd5+ (63 ... d3 64 c7 d2 65 Ra8+ Kb6 66 Rb8+ Ka7 67 Rb7+ Ka6 68 Rb1 and c8Q, winning) 64 Ke6 Rc5 65 Kxf6 Rxc6+ 66 Ke5 Rc1 67 Kxd4, and although at the cost of enormous efforts Black has managed to eliminate the c-pawn, he is literally one tempo short of being able to neutralise the f-pawn: 67 ... Rf1 68 f6 h5 69 Ke5 h4 70 Rh8 Re1+ 71 Kf5 Rf1+ 72 Ke6 Re1+ 73 Kd7 Rf1 74 Ke7 Re1+ 75 Kf8 Rh1 76 f7 h3 77 Ke7 and wins.

However, let us return to the no less fascinating position from the game.



49 Kc3?!

According to Korchnoi, he made this third-rate move on psychological grounds: it could be assumed that in their home analysis the Karpov team had not devoted sufficient attention to it.

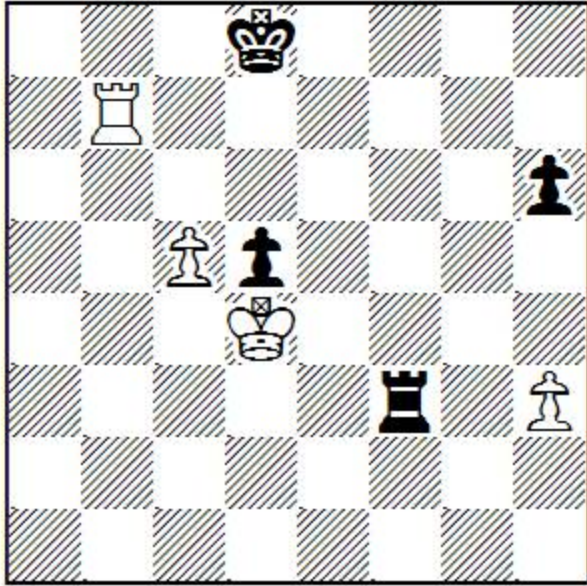
The 49 d5? breakthrough was premature in view of 49 ... Rd8! 50 d6 Re8, when the pawn endgame is drawn, and otherwise the black rook goes to e5, attacking the c5- and f5-pawns. But, as all the commentators remarked, two 'more dangerous moves for Black' suggested themselves – 49 Ra2 and 49 Re6:

1) 49 Ra2 (with the idea of a5-a6, exchanging the b7-pawn and attacking the c6-pawn) 49 ... Rg3+ 50 Ke4 Rxh3 51 a6 (51 d5 can be met either by Korchnoi's move 51 ... b4, or by 51 ... Rh4+ 52 Kf3 Rd4! 53 dxc6 bxc6 54 a6 Rd8 with a draw) 51 ... bxa6 52 Rxa6 Rh4+ 53 Kd3 Rh3+ 54 Kd2, and now it is bad to play 54 ... b4? 55 Rxc6 b3 56 Rd6! or 54 ... h5? 55 Rxc6 h4 56 Rc7+! (this is more forceful than Korchnoi's plan 56 Rb6 Rf3 57 Rxb5 h3 58 c6 h2 59 Rb7+ Ke8 60 Rh7 Kd8 61 Rxh2 Rxf5 62 Kd3 etc.) 56 ... Ke8 57 c6 with a decisive breakthrough (57 ... Rf3 58 Rf7 Kd8 59 Rxf6 h3 60 d5 h2 61 d6 and wins), but Black is rescued by 54 ... Rh2+! 55 Kc3 Rh3+ 56 Kb4 Rd3 57 Rxc6 Rxd4+ (Black's counterplay comes just in time: he is able to activate his king) 58 Kxb5 Rd5 59 Rc7+ Ke8 60 Kb6 Rxf5 61 Rb7 Rf2 62 c6 Rb2+ 63 Ka7 Rc2 64 c7 Kd7! 65 Kb8 Ke6 66 Rb5 f5 (by giving up one of his pawns, Black breaks through with his king to the kingside) 67 c8Q+ Rxc8+ 68 Kxc8 f4 69 Kc7 f3 70 Kc6 f2 71 Rb1 Kf5 72 Rf1 h5 73 Rxf2+ Kg4 74 Kd5 Kg3 with a draw.

On the basis of this variation, Korchnoi correctly concluded in his analysis that the move 49 Ra2 was insufficient for a win, and he proceeded to an analysis of the following energetic continuation, which had also, without any doubt, been thoroughly studied in the Karpov camp;

2) 49 Re6! The same plan of creating connected passed pawns, but without losing time on the capture of the a6-pawn: after a5-a6 and ... bxa6 White captures on c6 immediately, and this tempo, in my view, proves decisive. For example:

a) 49 ... Ra8 50 Rd6! Ke7 51 d5 Rxa5 (51 ... cxd5 52 Rb6 Rxa5 53 Rxb7+ Kd8 54 Kd4 is bad for Black) 52 Re6+! Kd7 53 Rxf6 b4 54 Kc4 b3! (a very sharp position!) 55 Rf7+ Kc8 56 Kxb3 cxd5 (Korchnoi also gives a detailed analysis of 56 ... Rxc5 57 d6, winning) 57 f6 Ra1 (57 ... Rb5+ 58 Kc3 Rxc5+ 59 Kd4 Rc1 60 Re7 Kd8 61 Kxd5 b5 62 Ke6 and wins) 58 Re7! (58 Kc3 is weaker: 58 ... Rf1 59 Kd4 Rf5 60 h4 h5 61 Rh7 Rxf6 62 Ke5 Rg6 and ... b7-b6 with a draw) 58 ... Kd8 59 Kc3 Rf1 60 Rxb7 Rxf6 61 Kd4 Rf3.



Analysis diagram

In Korchnoi's opinion, this is a draw: 62 Kxd5 Rxh3 63 Kc6 Kc8! However, White has the fearfully strong move 62 h4!!, forcing the black rook to take up an unfortunate position: after 62 ... Rf5 he wins by 63 c6! Kc8 64 Rh7 h5 65 Kc5 d4+ 66 Kb6, if 62 ... Rh3 he has 63 Ke5! (retaining the d5-pawn: it covers the king against checks) 63 ... d4 64 Kd6 Kc8 65 Rh7 Rc3 66 c6 Kb8 67 Kd7 d3 68 Rxh6 and Rd6, restraining the d-pawn and advancing his own pawns, or 62 ... Rf4+ 63 Ke5! Rg4 64 Kd6 Rg6+ 65 Kxd5 Rg4 66 h5 Rg1 (chasing after the h5-pawn allows the murderous Kd6) 67 Rh7 and wins;

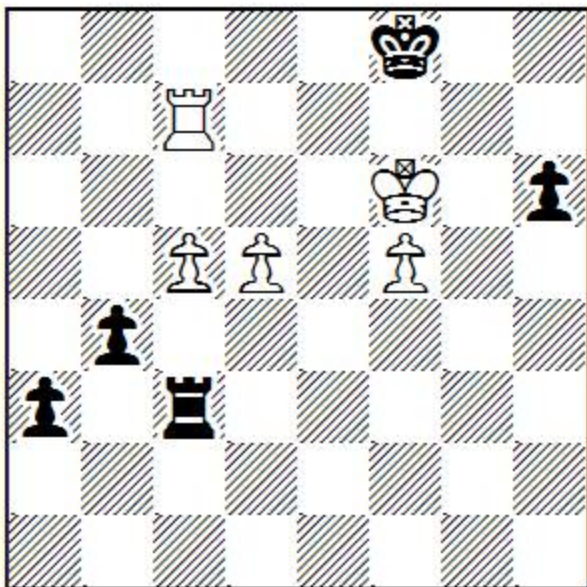
b) 49 ... Rg3+ (forced) 50 Ke4! (50 Kd2?! Ra3 51 d5 Rxa5 52 dxc6 bxc6 53 Rxc6 Ra4 54 Rb6 Rf4 with a draw) 50 ... Rxh3 51 a6! (if 51 d5 Rh4+ 52 Kd3 Black is saved by 52 ... Ra4 and ... Rxa5) 51 ... Rh4+ 52 Ke3 Rh3+ 53 Kf4 bxa6 54 Rxc6, and Black has a choice:

b1) 54 ... Rh4+ 55 Ke3 a5 56 Rb6 b4 57 Rb5! (this way, rather than 57 Rb7+ Ke8 58 c6 Kd8 59 Kd3, since here, instead of 59 ... a4? 60 d5! Rh1 61 Kc4 and wins as given by Korchnoi, there is the reply 59 ... b3! with unclear play) 57 ... b3 58 Rxa5, eliminating one of the black pawns, after which the other is no longer dangerous, and the pair of white pawns quickly decides the outcome: 58 ... Ke7 59 Rb5 Rh2 60 Ke4 b2 61 Kd5;

b2) 54 ... a5 55 Ke4 Rc3 (55 ... a4 56 Rb6!; 55 ... b4 56 Ra6!) 56 Kd5. Another very sharp position with passed pawns for both sides. White's decisive advantage is that his pawns are supported by his king and can always create threats to the enemy king. If 56 ... h5, then 57 Rc7+ Kg8 58 Ke6! h4 59 Kxf6 h3 60 Rg7+, for example: 60 ... Kh8 61 Rg4! Kh7 62 d5! Rxc5 63 d6 Rd5 (Korchnoi) 64 Rh4+ Kg8 65 Ke6 Rd3 66 d7 h2 (66 ... Re3+ 67 Kd5 Rd3+ 68 Rd4) 67 Rxh2 Re3+ 68 Kf6 Rd3 69 Rg2+ Kf8 70 Rg7 Rd6+ 71 Ke5 Rd1 72 Rh7, or 60 ... Kf8 61 d5! Rxc5 62 Ra7 (White has given up his c-pawn, but his d- and f-pawns are sufficient) 62 ... Rc8 (62 ... Ke8 63 Ke6) 63 Rh7 Kg8 64 Rxh3 Rd8 (Korchnoi) 65 Rd3 Kf8 66 d6 Ke8 67 Ke6, and Black's queenside pawns have not even managed to advance.

56 ... b4 is stronger, with the idea of 57 Ra6? h5 58 Rxa5 b3 (diverting White's attention with the help of the a- and b-pawns) 59 Ra7+ Kf8! 60 Ke6 h4 61 Kxf6 (61 Rf7+ Kg8 62 Kxf6 h3) 61 ... Ke8 62 d5 h3 63 c6 Kd8 64 Ke6 b2! with a draw (Korchnoi).

However, here too White can win with a cunning intermediate check – 57 Rc7+! After 57 ... Kg8 now 58 Ra7 h5 59 Rxa5 b3 60 Ra1! is good, while if 57 ... Kf8, then 58 Ke6 (but not 58 Ra7? b3 59 Rxa5 h5 etc.) 58 ... a4 (or 58 ... b3 59 d5 and Kxf6) 59 d5 a3 60 Kxf6 leads to the same situation, where the power of the passed pawns is combined with mating threats to the king.



Analysis diagram

There is no way of saving the game: 60 ... Kg8 61 Rg7+ Kh8 62 Ra7, or 60 ... Ke8 61 Ra7 b3 62 Rxa3 b2 63 Ra8+ Kd7 64 Rb8 Rxc5 65 Rxb2 Rxd5 66 Rb7+, and although Black has exchanged his a- and b-pawns for the white c- and d-pawns, the resulting ending with f-pawn against h-pawn is hopeless for him.

Thus the given analysis of the variations with 49 Re6! shows that the adjourned position was nevertheless won for White. In reaching this conclusion I was helped not only by a computer, but also in the first instance by intuition. After making a careful study of Korchnoi's deep analysis, I was imbued with the persistent feeling that White's positional advantage in this original endgame should be sufficient for a win. And subsequent searches confirmed this ...

As for 49 Kc3?!, the move made in the game, it objectively throws away the win, although it sets a clever trap.

49 ... Re8?!

'Since the pawn endgame is drawn, the rook occupies the important open file. After 49 ... Rg3+? 50 Kb4 Rxh3 Black faces retribution for his "pawn-grabbing": 51 d5 cxd5 52 c6 bxc6 53 a6 and the a-pawn cannot be stopped.' (Tal). However, after 53 ... Rh4+ 54 Kc5 Ra4 (Kan) 55 Kb6 b4 56 a7 c5 57 Kb7 c4 58 Re6 Rxa7+ 59 Kxa7 c3 60 Rc6 d4 it is not Black who loses, but White! Instead of 52 c6? the correct move is 52 Re6! Rf3 53 Rb6 Rxf5 54 Rxb7+ Ke6 55 a6 Rf1 56 a7 Ra1 57 c6, winning. But a move earlier Black too can play more strongly: 51 ... Rh4+! 52 Kb3 Rh3+ 53 Kb2 cxd5 (Kan), gaining a draw: 54 c6 bxc6 55 a6 Rh4 56 Kb3 c5 57 Ra2 Rh3+, or 54 Re6 b4! 55 Rb6 Ra3 56 Rxb7+ Ke8 57 c6 Kd8 58 Rf7 Rxa5 59 Rxf6 Kc7.

Where then is the win for White? It is pointed out by Korchnoi: 51 a6! bxa6 52 d5! The triumph of the main idea! Black has two replies:

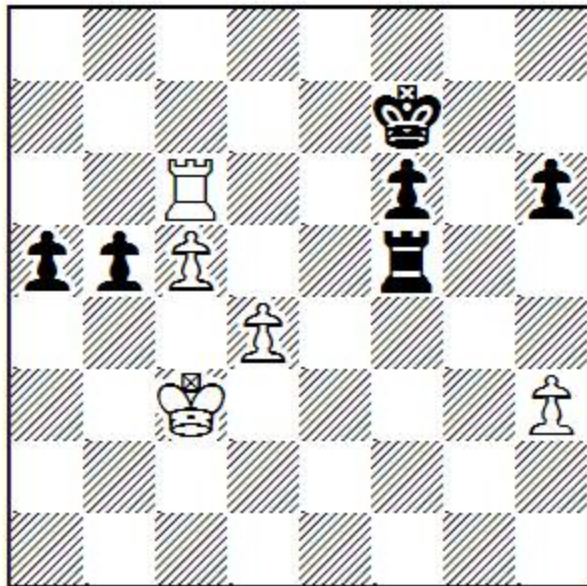
1) 52 ... cxd5 53 c6 Rh4+ 54 Kc5 Rc4+ 55 Kxd5 a5 (55 ... Rc1 56 Kd6 and wins – Korchnoi) 56 Kd6! (Korchnoi's plan 56 Rb2 Rc1 57 Rxb5 is insufficient on account of 57 ... Ke7!) 56 ... b4 57 Re7+ Kf8 58 Ra7 b3 59 c7, and White wins, by exploiting the power of his passed c-pawn and the retained f5-pawn. Black is not helped by 53 ... Rg3 54 c7 Rg4+ 55 Kc5 Rc4+ 56 Kd6 d4 57 Kd7 d3 58 Rd2 Rd4+ 59 Kc6 Rc4+ 60 Kb7;

2) 52 ... Rh4+ 53 Ka5 cxd5 54 Rc2 d4! (Korchnoi rejects 54 ... Ke7 because of 55 c6 Kd8 56 Kb6 Kc8 57 Rg2, when the rook invades decisively along the g-file) 55 c6 d3, and now not 56 c7? dxc2 57 c8Q

Rc4 58 Qe6+ Kf8 59 Qxf6+ Ke8 60 Qe6+ Kd8! 61 Qd6+ Kc8 62 Qxa6+ Kc7 63 Qb6+ Kc8 64 Qe6+ Kd8 with a draw (Korchnoi), but only 56 Rd2! Rc4 57 Kb6, gaining a win: 57 ... b4 (57 ... Ke7 58 Rxd3) 58 Rxd3 a5 59 c7 a4 60 Rd7+ Ke8 61 Rd6 (threatening Rc6) 61 ... Rxc7 62 Kxc7 a3 63 Ra6 h5 64 Kd6 (the king calmly returns and picks up the pawns – just in time!) 65 ... h4 65 Kc5 h3 66 Kxb4 h2 67 Re6+ Kf7 68 Re1.

To complete the picture, we should mention that Black is also not saved by 50 ... Rd3 (instead of 50 ... Rxh3) 51 a6! Rxd4+ 52 Ka5 Ra4+ 53 Kb6 or 51 ... bxa6 52 Ka5 Rxd4 53 Kxa6 b4 54 Kb6 b3 55 Kxc6 Rb4 (55 ... Rc4 56 Kd6 Rd4+ 57 Kc7 Rc4 58 c6 Rc2 59 Re3 b2 60 Rb3 Ke7 61 h4 h5 62 Rb7! Ke8 63 Kd6 and wins – Korchnoi) 56 Rb2 h5 57 Kc7 h4 58 c6 Ke7 59 Kc8 Kd6 60 c7 Rc4 61 Rd2+ Kc6 62 Kd8 Kb7 63 Rd7, and the curtain comes down.

Thus 49 ... Rg3+? would indeed have lost. But a draw could have been gained by the fairly obvious (although what can be considered obvious during the resumption of the 31st game of an exhausting match?!) 49 ... Rg5! (attacking the f5-pawn, which is far more important than the h3-pawn) 50 Re6 Rxf5 51 a6 bxa6 52 Rxc6 a5!



Analysis diagram

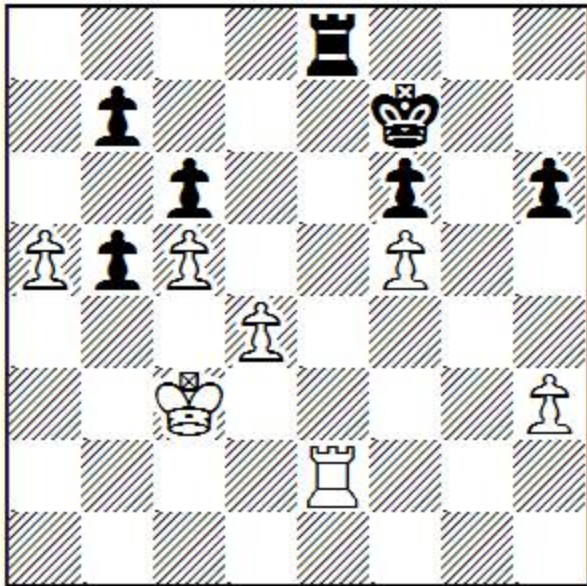
Black's position is far better than in many of the variations examined earlier, since the absence of the f5-pawn allows him to activate his king.

Objectively the chances of the two sides are now roughly equal:

1) 53 Kd3, and now a possible continuation is 53 ... Rf3+ 54 Ke4 Rxh3 55 Rc7+ Kg6 56 d5 f5+! (Korchnoi) 57 Kd4 Rh4+ 58 Kd3 a4 59 d6 a3 60 d7 a2 61 Rc6+! (61 d8Q? Rh3+!) 61 ... Kh5 62 Ra6 Ra4 63 d8Q Rxa6 64 Qe8+ Kg4 65 Qe2+ Kg5 with a draw, although 53 ... a4!? is more cunning: 54 Ke4? (54 Rb6 is correct) 54 ... Rf1 55 Ra6 f5+!, and it is now Black who is playing for a win: 56 Ke5 f4 57 Ra7+ Kg6 58 Ra5 f3! (but not Korchnoi's suggestion of 58 ... Kg5 59 c6 or 58 ... b4 59 Rxa4 b3 60 Rb4 with a draw) 59 Kf4 f2 60 Kf3 b4 61 Rxa4 b3 62 Rb4 Rh1 63 Kxf2 b2 and wins;

2) 53 Ra6 Rf3+ 54 Kd2 b4 55 Rxa5 Ke6 with a draw (Korchnoi) or 54 ... a4, and White has to sacrifice a pawn: 55 d5 Rf5 56 Ra7+ Kg6 57 Kc3 Rxd5 58 Kb4, but this is sufficient only for a draw – 58 ... Rd3 etc.

Karpov's move 49 ... Re8?! is also not losing, although it nevertheless leaves Black more complicated problems.



50 Rd2

Tal recommended the move 50 Ra2 instead. And indeed, 50 ... Re3+ 51 Kd2! (51 Kb4 Rd3! with a draw – Korchnoi) 51 ... Rxh3 52 a6 bxa6 53 Rxa6 would have led to a position from the variation with 49 Ra2, where Black would have had to demonstrate the only way to draw. But it should be remembered that Korchnoi deliberately avoided this line, which had certainly been analysed in detail by his opponent's

team. Perhaps it was this turn of events that Karpov was aiming for, when he played 49 ... Re8. And Korchnoi, true to his psychological strategy, endeavours to finally divert his opponent from his adjournment analysis.

50 ... Re4

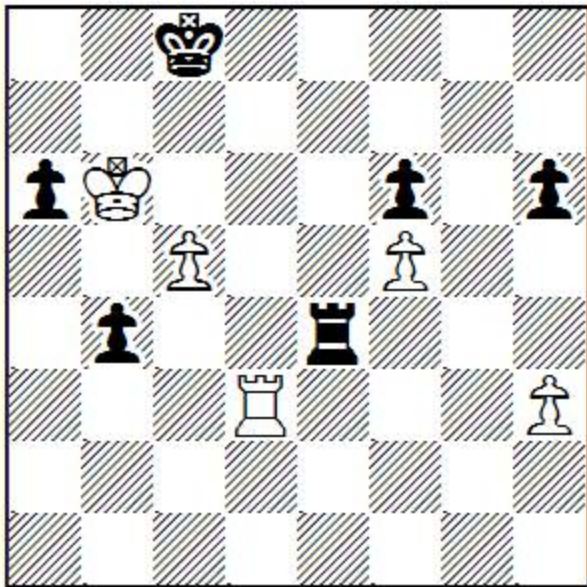
'A perfectly sound way to draw. The 51 d5 breakthrough is not dangerous for Black. The only plan to play for a win is to break through with the king on the queenside. The next few moves are forced.' (Tal)

51 Kb4 (again Korchnoi avoids 51 Ra2) 51 ... Ke8! 52 a6

'A last attempt, which unexpectedly proves successful.' (Kan)

52 ... bxa6 53 Ka5 Kd7 54 Kb6! b4 55 d5 (the long-awaited breakthrough, which now requires Black to defend with a certain accuracy) 55 ... cxd5 56 Rxd5+ Kc8 57 Rd3

Of course, not 57 c6? b3!



57 ... a5?

After reaching the second time control (on the 56th move) Karpov commits a fatal mistake, by making an instinctive move: he wants to active his passed pawns as quickly as possible. But Black has no time to advance them! It was essential to combine attack and defence: according to Tal, 'all Black's difficulties would have been behind him, had he played 57 ... Rc4! 58 c6 (58 Rg3 Rc3 or even 58 ... Kd7) 58 ... Rc3.'

Indeed, in this case the black rook would have successfully supported the advance of its b-pawn and restrained the advance of the enemy c-pawn. A draw follows after both 59 Rd6 b3 60 Rxf6 Kd8 61 Rd6+ Ke7 (Korchnoi), and 59 Rd2 b3 60 Rg2 Kd8 61 Kb7 a5 62 Rd2+ Ke7 63 c7 a4 64 c8Q Rxc8 65 Kxc8 a3 66 Rd7+, and the strength of the black pawns obliges White to force perpetual check.

Commenting on Karpov's error, the veteran Soviet master Ilya Kan wrote: 'This rook ending will join the history of enigmas in the battle for the world championship.' In my opinion, this is artistic exaggeration: chess history knows of much greater 'enigmas' – Chigorin's terrible blunder in the 23rd game of his match with Steinitz (*Volume 1, Game No.26*), Bronstein's blackouts during the resumption of the 6th and 23rd games of his match with Botvinnik (*Volume 2, Game Nos.61 and 66*), and so on.

58 Rg3 (and suddenly it transpires that there is no longer a draw!) **58 ... b3**

In Tal's opinion, 'after 58 ... Rc4 Black would have retained chances of saving the game.' Other commentators also recommended this 'more tenacious' move. But here too White has a clear-cut way to win: 59 c6 Kd8 60 c7+ Ke7 61 Re3+ Kd6 62 Rd3+ Ke5 63 Rd8, and after 63 ... b3 64 c8Q Rxc8 65 Rxc8 a4 66 Rc5+ Kd4 67 Rb5 Kc4 there is the out-flanking manoeuvre 68 Ka5 a3 69 Rb4+! Kc3 70 Ka4 a2 71 Rxb3+ Kc2 72 Ra3 Kb2 73 Kb4, transposing into a won pawn endgame.

59 Kc6!

'By bringing up his king with gain of tempo, White wins a very important pawn.' (Tal). The outcome is decided. Karpov made a further dozen dutiful, and in the end altogether unnecessary moves.

59 ... Kb8 (or **59 ... Rd4** 60 Rxb3 a4 61 Rg3) **60 Rxb3+ Ka7** 61 Rb7+ Ka6 62 Rb6+ Ka7 63 Kb5 a4 64 Rxf6 Rf4 65 Rxh6 a3 66 Ra6+ Kb8 67 Rxa3 Rxf5 68 Rg3 Rf6 69 Rg8+ Kc7 70 Rg7+ Kc8 71 Rh7 1-0

The scores became level: 5-5, and the fate of the match now hung by a thread.

'The phenomenal "five-five" became not only competitive, but also ideological equality: it turned out that the defector, deprived of his family and his homeland, frequently surrounded by a whole herd of "rhinos" – in conditions of freedom was capable of achieving the impossible.' (E.Sztein)

How was it that Korchnoi managed to achieve this miracle? Why, for almost the third time in a row – a unique record in his glorious career – was Karpov unable to hold an inferior ending? Of course, it is simplest to refer to the champion's tiredness. But such an explanation, in my view, belittles the feat of Korchnoi, who, although 20 years older than his opponent, tirelessly and constantly set him new problems. Of course, his fantastic drive and inventiveness, even in a hopeless match situation, also affected Karpov's condition and provoked him into making further mistakes. It is important to note that we are talking not about serious oversights and blunders, but of the gradual deterioration of position: little-by-little Korchnoi outplayed his great opponent! I think that these wins are far more weighty than the wins in complicated endings against Polugayevsky or even Spassky in the 1977 matches.

Here is the opinion of Korchnoi himself: 'What in fact happened in the second half of the match? Karpov, who had a colossal psychological, competitive, chess and, finally, political advantage, was not only unable to capitalise on it, but he lost it all along the way. The only concession to which the Soviet side agreed – to remove their psychologist out of my field of vision – cost the champion dearly. Karpov lost his best qualities, and in particular his keen psychological evaluation of the position! This is a kind of knowledge of the impression of the position that your opponent has. The ability to understand the course of his thinking – this means a great deal! It means reducing by at least a half the analysis of possible replies by the opponent, and, to put it simply, anticipating what he will do. Karpov possesses this quality more than anyone else – and he lost it! In this respect he looked so powerful in the 13th game and the first half of the 17th, but he looked equally helpless in the 29th and the 31st! It was evident that he had completely lost confidence in himself.'

Objectively speaking, it should be remarked that it was not at all because of Zukhar's absence from the front rows of the hall that Korchnoi won these three games. He fought like a lion! Some six years later his heroic example inspired me in the even more hopeless situation, which arose after the 27th game of my first match with Karpov (1984/85). And the events at the finish of the match in Baguio were to some extent a prototype of the drama that was played out in the last third of our Moscow match and especially its concluding days. However, about this in Volume 7 ...

Here, after the 31st game, victory in the match would go to the player who scored the first win. Karpov took a time-out and, in order to somehow dispel and reduce the stress, he travelled with Sevastyanov to Manila, where he furiously supported 'our' team in the USSR-Yugoslavia world basketball championship. And in the meantime in Baguio, 'our' other team launched a decisive offensive against the yogis – at that moment the Soviet side had everything under control.

Schmid had left after the 27th game (he had pressing matters in Germany), and was replaced on the jury by the new chief arbiter – Filip from 'fraternal' Czechoslovakia. Euwe, who had arrived for the finish of the match, also left, alas – precisely after the 31st game. 'Karpov had to wait for the departure of Euwe, the only person by whom the Soviets were slightly restrained,' writes Korchnoi. 'The President left Baguio at the most heated days of the match, so as to put in order ... the Venezuelan Chess Federation. Apparently this was more important than the question of who would become world champion. True, before his departure, in a conversation with Keene and Frau Leeuwerik, Euwe said that if the Soviets were to victimise the yogis again, he would permit me to stop the match.'

The attack began on 14th October with a press conference by Campomanes, which stated that the 'criminals' Dwyer and Shepperd were again visiting the hotel where the challenger was living and using the official match transport, and he demanded of Korchnoi 'the observance of norms of decency and respect to the organisers'. In reply Korchnoi invited journalists to his place, and under the guidance of Dada and Didi he performed a series of yoga exercises.

The next day, on the eve of the 32nd game, the Soviet delegation made a written demand to the jury that the 'criminal terrorists' should be removed from the match. Here is a noteworthy extract: 'The match organiser Mr F.Campomanes has several times officially demanded the termination of this connection and in his memorandum of 13th September (*after the 21st game – G.K.*) he warned about the possibility of terminating the match in the aim of ensuring individual and public security. However, the connection of the members of the challenger's delegation with the criminal element has continued.'

As we see, back in 1978 Campomanes and the Karpov team were conceiving *the possibility of terminating the match*. When the score became 5-5, rumours began to circulate that the Soviet delegation, concerned about the state of the champion's health, had suggested

that FIDE should terminate the match – in which case Karpov would, of course, retain his title. And at some point Euwe had supposedly said to Keene that with the scores equal the match should be terminated. Such a scenario could have come about, for example, in the event of a draw in the 32nd game. It is quite possible that this idea was suggested to Dr Euwe. At any event, six and a half years later it was put into effect with the formal approach by Sevastyanov to another FIDE President – Campomanes, when he terminated my first match with Karpov in a similar situation and under the same pretext ...

On the day of the 32nd game, 17th October, a crucial meeting of the jury took place, and Keene, who by that time had become the head of the challenger's delegation, 'after being obstinate for the sake of appearances, agreed to remove the yogis from Baguio'. And at two o'clock in the afternoon, without Korchnoi's knowledge – 'all the power and information was then with Keene' – they left his villa.

According to Korchnoi, when he arrived for the game the hall resembled an arena of police manoeuvres: the building was full of uniformed and plainclothes policemen. Before the game he chanced to see 'on the faces of the Soviets a suppressed sense of triumph, malicious glee.' And he went on ... 'The game began. The directors of Soviet chess were sitting in the front row of the stalls, and in the 4th row was ... our old acquaintance – Zukhar!' At about a quarter to eight Stean telegraphed a protest to Dr Euwe. But it was already too late ... The challenger played badly and adjourned the game in a hopeless position (*Game No.77*).

The following morning 'on his own initiative' Keene phoned Filip and informed him of Korchnoi's resignation! But the latter, in turn, wrote Filip a letter: 'I shall not resume the 32nd game, But I am not going to sign the score-sheet because the game was played under absolutely illegal conditions ...'

Korchnoi protested to FIDE and did not appear at the closing ceremony. 'This was also my protest against the behaviour of the Soviets and Campomanes. In a match, which was transformed into a blood battle, where with the complicity of the jury all concepts of fair play were rejected, where rules and agreements were unscrupulously broken – in such a competition, even the closing ceremony turns into a place of execution for a person without rights.'

This painful defeat effectively signified the collapse of Korchnoi's hopes of ever becoming world champion. This makes it all the more

surprising that, immediately after the match, whereas the young champion went off 'for a well-earned rest' (such a thing also happens nowadays), the 47-year-old challenger found in himself the strength to lead the Swiss team at the Olympiad in Buenos Aires and to achieve the best result on board one: $+7=4$. After all his trials in the Philippines this looked incredible! And on the results of 1978 Korchnoi was deservedly awarded the only chess 'Oscar' in his career, and therefore one that was especially precious.

Last Battle for the Throne

The strict boycott on the part of the Soviet Federation forced Korchnoi to miss at least two major tournaments in 1979 – Montreal (1-2. Karpov and Tal) and Tilburg (1. Karpov). But his performances in other events were fully at the level of a vice-world champion: a share of 1st-2nd places with Ljubojevic in Sao Paulo and Buenos-Aires (overall score: +15=11), and wins in a four-player match-tournament in South Africa and the Swiss Open Championship – 12 out of 13, 4½ points ahead of the second prize-winner.

In the winter, preparing for the next Candidates cycle, Korchnoi played in Linares (2nd-4th places) and Wijk aan Zee (3rd), seeing as there were no USSR representatives. The form he acquired helped him to comfortably overcome the first difficult barrier – the quarter-final match with Petrosian (Velden, March 1980). This was a 10-game match and Korchnoi, after winning the 5th and 9th games with seven draws, won ahead of schedule by 5½-3½. And just a month later he shared 1st-3rd places with Andersson and Miles at a tournament in London.

The next test, like three years earlier, was a semi-final match with Polugayevsky (Buenos Aires, summer 1980), this time of 'just' 12 games. This new duel proved very difficult for Korchnoi: he was quite unable to win with White! Polugayevsky, who was on the crest of a wave (he had beaten Tal in the quarter-final) put up a far more tenacious resistance than in Evian. After losing an almost level rook endgame in the 4th game, he won the 6th; after losing the 8th he drew level with the help of a brilliant novelty in the 12th (*Volume 3, Game No.27*) and again levelled the scores: 6-6.

After this the regulations stipulated two additional games, in the event of 1-1 – a further two, and if the scores were still equal the winner of the match would be the player who had won more games with Black (viz. Korchnoi).

So, a classic tie-break of two games began. In the 13th game Korchnoi was again unable to make use of the white pieces; moreover, in an uneasy endgame with knight against bishop he had to seal the only saving move! Many, including the chief arbiter Najdorf, thought that the adjourned position was lost for White, but on the resumption Korchnoi accurately forced a draw.

A highly intriguing situation arose, since Polugayevsky could be satisfied only with a win – either in the 14th game, or, in the event of a draw, in one of next two additional games. Chess fans wondered: would the Soviet grandmaster be able to repeat the miracle that he had performed in the 12th game? What happened next was eloquently described by Korchnoi's press attaché Emmanuel Sztein:

'The decisive, 14th game began on Sunday at 4 p.m. Again, we had the black pieces. What opening should be chosen? Korchnoi with his coaches, grandmasters Stean and Seirawan, had been up all night, polishing a sharp line of play in the English Opening, where Black checks with his knight at d3 and White loses the chance to castle. The variation was risky, but Korchnoi was counting on the element of surprise: if his opponent played the old way, we would spring on him an improvement found by Michael Stean ... At the same time the Hübner-Portisch match was being played in Italy, and Bent Larsen was there as correspondent for the Argentine newspaper *Clarín*. When I went out for the newspapers the next morning and opened *Clarín*, I was dumbfounded – there was the entire variation! In full! It turned out that it had been played in a game between Hübner and Portisch the previous day, which ended in a draw. But Larsen! Larsen, who was very familiar with this line of play, showed how Black could have improved. But before that he showed an improvement for White. An unpleasant surprise!

'When I returned to the hotel room, they were, of course, sitting there preparing. I showed them the newspaper, producing near panic. We didn't know what to do and were close to despair. Viktor and I went for a stroll, and at one point I said, "There's only one way out: you have to stake your all. Serov (*the leader of the Soviet delegation*. – G.K.) is unlikely to read Spanish. Nor is he likely to buy newspapers for hard currency. As for the embassy, they won't send the papers until tomorrow – after all, it's a Sunday!" Viktor was lost in thought ... Finally, the game began, and – Korchnoi chose that very line of play! I said to them, "Relax." Indeed, the critical position in that line of play comes somewhere on the 14th or 15th move: it was either or ... I watched Viktor rush off the stage and pace about in his cage-like rest room. He was waiting! Like a beast in ambush, waiting to pounce ... Of course Polugayevsky didn't know about the newspaper – and it was effectively all over in 10 minutes! And a couple of days later Larsen wrote a piece

in *Clarín* under the heading “Those who don’t read Larsen land in trouble!”

Such an amazing story could only happen, of course, in the pre-computer, pre-internet era. Polugayevsky’s downfall was caused by the tortoise-like speed with which information spread ... Let us analyse this dramatic game, the first 14 moves of which coincided with the 5th game of the ‘parallel’ Candidates match Hübner-Portisch.

Game 34

L.Polugayevsky-V.Korchnoi

Candidates Match, Buenos Aires 1980, 14th game

English Opening A34

1 Nf3 Nf6 2 c4 c5

In the preceding even-numbered games of the match Korchnoi played only 2 ... b6, resulting in the Queen’s Indian Defence (*Volume 3, Game No.27*).

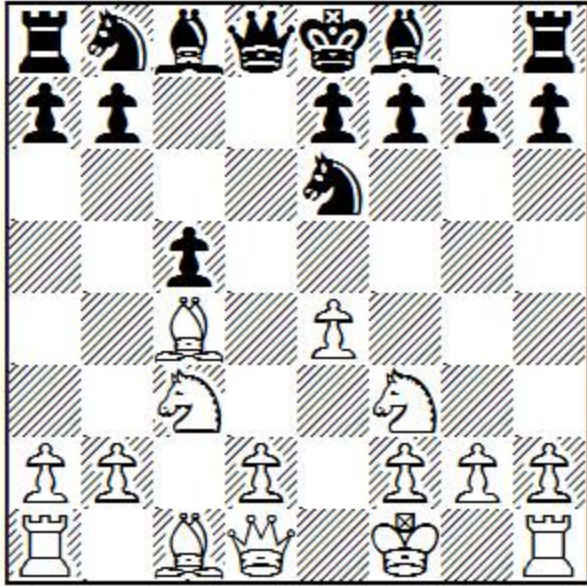
3 Nc3 d5 4 cxd5 Nxd5 5 e4 (a popular move at that time) **5 ... Nb4 6 Bc4 Nd3+**

The sensational game Polugayevsky-Tal (Riga Interzonal 1979) went 6 ... Be6 7 Bxe6 Nd3+ 8 Kf1 fxe6 9 Ng5 Qb6!? 10 Qe2? c4 with excellent play for Black (*Volume 2, Game No.145*), but already in 1980 the strong reply 10 Qf3! had been found.

7 Ke2 Nf4+

The exchange 7 ... Nxc1+ 8 Rxc1 has been judged to favour White since the time of Takács’s games against Spielmann (Vienna 1928) and Rubinstein (Rogaska Slatina 1929), and also Botvinnik against Kasparian (1938).

8 Kf1 Ne6



This knight manoeuvre also used to be considered inadequate – on account of the following pawn sacrifice. However, Portisch, and immediately after him Korchnoi and Stean, worked out a new plan of development for Black.

9 b4!?

After the quiet 9 Ne5 (Averbakh-Bondarevsky, Moscow 1946) Black's most successful reply has been 9 ... g6.

9 ... cxb4

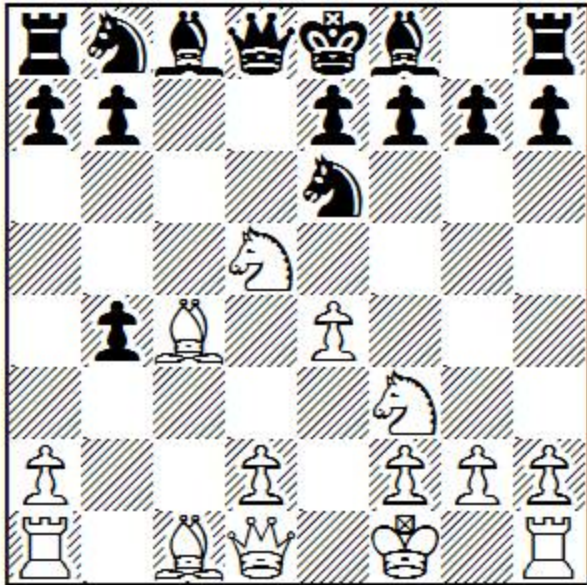
Soon, following the example of Tony Miles, an interesting pawn sacrifice came to the fore – 9 ... g6!? 10 bxc5 Bg7 11 Bxe6 Bxe6 12 d4 Nc6 13 Be3 with a sharp, unclear game (Seirawan-Miles, London 1982; Kasparov-Shirov, Pestovo simultaneous 1986; Vallejo-Leko, Linares 2003). Theory has not yet given a final verdict on this variation. It is often avoided both by Black, and by White: it is too risky a venture!

10 Nd5

At that time this was the main continuation. 'White seizes space, develops his c1-bishop on a splendid diagonal and apparently gains very good prospects. But Portisch was able to overcome this optical illusion and re-evaluate the resulting positions.' (Makarichev)

Later 10 Ne2! was deemed to be stronger: 10 ... Nc7 (now 10 ... g6? is bad on account of 11 Bb2 Bg7 12 Bxe6! Bxb2 13 Bxf7+) 11 d4 e6 12 h4 with excellent compensation for the pawn (Hübner-Tukmakov,

Wijk aan Zee 1984; Kasparov-Grünberg, Hamburg simultaneous 1985).

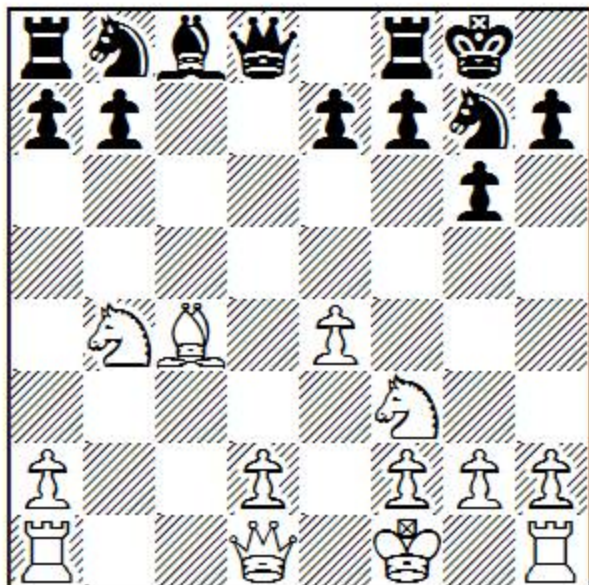


10 ... g6!

This discovery virtually overturned the evaluation of the position! Black solves the problem of his kingside development, and in the resulting 'Grünfeld' set-ups it is White who has to play accurately, since his predominance in the centre does not compensate for the drawbacks of his king's position at f1.

11 Bb2 (11 a3 Bg7 12 Rb1 Nc6 with equality is no better for White) **11 ... Bg7 12 Bxg7 Nxg7 13 Nxb4 0-0**

But not immediately **13 ... Bg4?** in view of **14 Bxf7+ Kxf7 15 Ne5+** or **15 Ng5+**.



14 d4?

It is strange, but both Hübner and Polugayevsky were let down by their sense of danger. The move in the game looks natural, but it allows the opponent to make an immediate attack on White's centre. And although this is not yet finally catastrophic, it was far more circumspect to play 14 h3 with equality, as recommended by Larsen and many other commentators.

14 ... Bg4

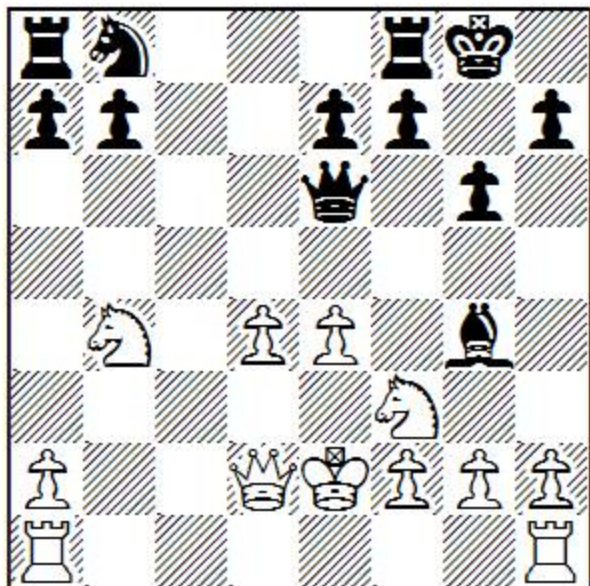
'Here Polugayevsky thought for 30 minutes and for the first time he "did not guess" the move made by Hübner. Indeed, things are not at all easy for White: he effectively has a "Grünfeld" with a bad king and the knight at f3 already pinned.' (Makarichev)

15 Ke2?!

Hübner chose 15 Qd2, and after 15 ... Bxf3 16 gxf3 Nc6 (16 ... a5!?) 17 Nxc6 bxc6 Portisch achieved a comfortable game – if 18 Kg2 there can follow 18 ... e5! 19 Rhd1 exd4 20 Qxd4 Qh4. The continuation was 18 f4?! e6 19 Qe3 Qf6 20 Be2 Rfd8 21 Rd1 Rab8 22 a3 Rb2 23 Kg2 Rdb8 24 Rhe1 R8b3 25 Rd3 (25 Qc1 Qh4) 25 ... Rxd3 26 Qxd3 (or 26 Bxd3 Nh5 27 f5 Qh4) 26 ... Qxf4 and Black should have won. But Hübner miraculously managed to save the game (and in the end, after a series of draws, he won the match: 6½-4½).

In the opinion of grandmaster Makarichev, 'White should have played 15 d5 and begun the withdrawal of his forces (bishop to e2, b4-knight via the route c2-e3 or d3-e5), avoiding losses if possible.' But here too after 15 ... Nd7 Black has an excellent game: if 16 Be2, then 16 ... f5! is strong.

15 ... Qd6! 16 Qd2 Ne6 17 Bxe6 (White is now forced to give up bishop for knight) 17 ... Qxe6



18 Ke3?!

'This manoeuvre has its logic: Ne5 is threatened. Despite everything, White fights for the initiative!' (Makarichev). Even so, this is a mistake which aggravates White's difficulties. Of course, Polugayevsky realised that it was bad to move his king into the centre, but he wanted to eliminate the pin. Black's unexpected novelty had obviously upset his mental equilibrium (it is no secret that he usually did not react in the best way in such situations).

18 Qd3 came into consideration, with the idea of developing the h1-rook and playing Kf1. In this case the sharp 18 ... f5 19 e5 a5 (Sveshnikov) is refuted by the computer stroke 20 Qb3! Qxb3 21 axb3 with a saving pin on the a-file. And although after 18 ... Rd8 or 18 ... Nd7 Black would have retained an appreciable advantage, in view of the insecurity of the white king and the eccentric position of the knight at b4, White's position would still have been defensible.

18 ... f5!

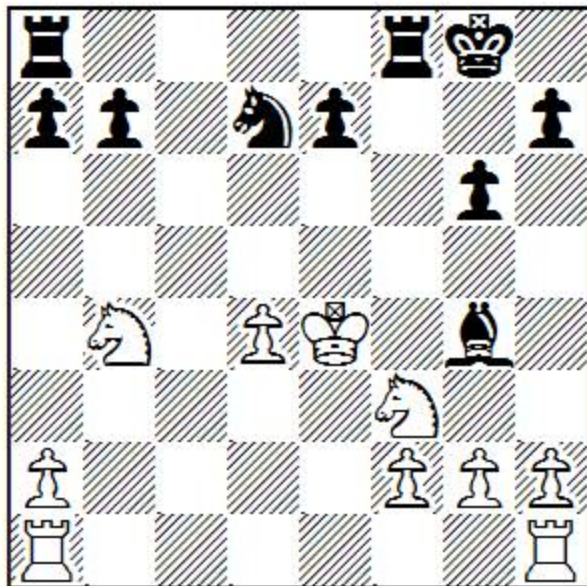
The most energetic, although Black also has a rather dangerous initiative after 18 ... Nd7 19 Ng5 (Makarichev; 19 Nd5 Bxf3 and 20 ... f5!) 19 ... Qd6!? 20 f3 (20 h3 Nb6!) 20 ... f6 21 Nxh7 Kxh7 22 fxg4 Nb6.

19 Qd3

'After 19 Ne5? Black would have gained a decisive attack by 19 ... Nd7 20 f3 Nxe5 21 dxe5 fxe4 22 fxg4 Rad8 23 Qb2 Qb6+ (followed by 24 Kxe4 Rf2 25 Qb3+ Kg7 – G.K.). White's position is also unenviable after 19 e5? f4+ 20 Ke2 Nc6.' (Makarichev). 20 ... Bxf3+ is even better: 21 Kxf3 a5 22 Nc2 Qd5+ or 21 gxf3 Qc4+ 22 Ke1 a5 23 Nc2 Nc6 and wins.

19 ... fxe4! 20 Qxe4 Qxe4+ 21 Kxe4 Nd7

'Play has gone into an ending that is difficult for White. In addition Polugayevsky had only 10 minutes left for 19 moves.' (Makarichev)



22 Rhc1?!

White had already lost heart. The only way of retaining chances of saving the game was by the activation of the ill-starred knight – 22 Nd5, in order after 22 ... Bxf3+ 23 gxf3 Nf6+ 24 Nxf6+ Rxf6 25 Rhc1 Re6+ 26 Kf4 Rd8 27 Rc7 Rxd4+ 28 Kg3 Rb4 to invade the 7th rank with the rooks: 29 Rd1! Kf7 30 Rdd7 Re2 31 a3 Rb1 32 Kg2 Rbb2 33 Kg3 etc. However, 22 ... e6! would have left Black with an obvious advantage,

after both 23 Nc7 Rac8 24 Ra(h)c1 Rf5! or 23 Nf4(c3) Bxf3+ 24 gxf3 Rf5!, and 23 Ne3 Nf6+, since 24 Kd3 Bxf3 25 gxf3 Nd5!, 24 Kf4 Bxf3 25 gxf3 Rad8 and 24 Ke5 Rad8 etc. are all insufficient.

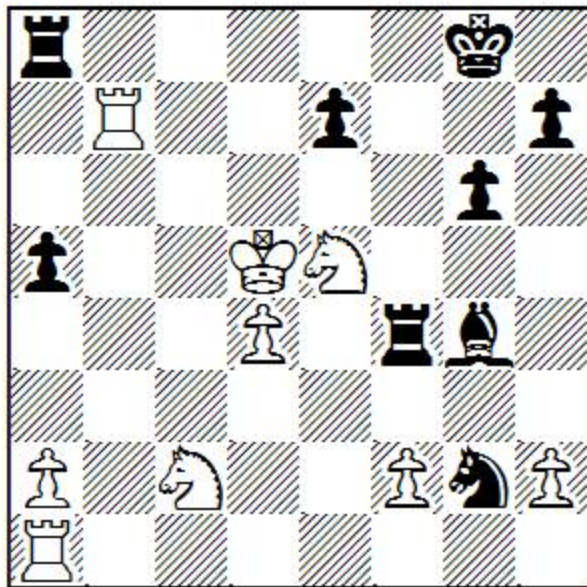
22 ... Rf5!

‘A very unpleasant move, preparing both the manoeuvre ... Nd7-f6-d5, and the doubling of rooks on the f-file.’ (Makarichev). Despite the absence of the queens, the position has not lost its middlegame features: there are still plenty of pieces on the board, and Black’s chances of creating threats to the white king are far from exhausted, to say nothing about an attack on the weak white pawns.

23 Rc7?!

‘The rook moves into a fork. The lesser evil was probably 23 Nd3, retaining some practical chances.’ (Makarichev). Whereas 23 Nd5 would have encountered the strong reply 23 ... Nf6+! 24 Nxf6+ exf6 25 Re1 (25 d5 Re8+ 26 Kd4 Rd8) 25 ... Bxf3+ 26 gxf3 Re8+ 27 Kd3 Rxe1 28 Rxe1 Rxf3+ 29 Kc4 Rxf2.

23 ... Nf6+ 24 Kd3 (24 Ke3 a5 25 Nd3 Bxf3 26 gxf3 Nd5+ etc.) 24 ... a5 25 Nc2 Nd5 26 Rxb7 Nf4+ 27 Ke4 Nxe2 28 Ne5 Rf4+ 29 Kd5



29 ... Bf5! 30 Rc7

‘There is no defence against the threats of ... Be4 or ... Bxc2, since 30 Rb2 Rxf2 31 Rc1 Rc8 and ... Nf4+ would have led to mate. White loses a piece.’ (Makarichev)

30 ... Rd8+ 31 Kc5 Bxc2 32 Nc6 Re8 33 Nxe7+ Kf8 34 Nc6 Rf5+ 35 Ne5 Nf4 36 Rxh7 Kg8 37 Rd7 Nd3+ 38 Kb6 Nxe5 39 dxe5 Rxe5 40 Rc1 Rf6+ 41 Ka7 Rxf2 0-1

White resigned, and Korchnoi won the match.

But, to all appearances, the peak of Korchnoi's form had already passed, and a certain crisis was apparent. It is probable that his age was beginning to tell – after all one's energy reserve is not unlimited – as well as his lack of appearances in the strongest tournaments: to maintain the required form one must constantly play with players of equal class! Whereas Korchnoi's first match with Polugayevsky had indicated an unprecedented creative surge (undoubtedly associated with moving to the West: he had become a free man), the second match proclaimed that the end of the golden period of his career was approaching.

Things were also very difficult for Korchnoi in the final Candidates match with the outstanding German grandmaster Robert Hübner (Merano, winter 1980/81), one of the rare world-class players in history who has been successful not only in chess – he is a prominent philologist, and the author of numerous scientific works (to say nothing of his chess articles and commentaries).

Many players of the older generation remember the remarkable finishing spurt of the young Hübner at the Interzonal tournament in Mallorca (1970), his confident, mature play in the match with Petrosian (1971) and his unexpected resignation of the match after six draws and a loss from a good position in the 7th; another tragic defeat at the hands of Petrosian came at the finish of the Interzonal tournament in Biel (1976), which denied him a place in the Candidates matches. But in the next cycle Dr Hübner attained the peak of his career: he shared 1st-3rd places with Petrosian and Portisch in the Interzonal tournament (Rio de Janeiro 1979), then won matches against Adorjan and Portisch, and began splendidly in the final encounter with Viktor the Terrible ...

Back in 1973 they had met in a training match of eight games, won by Korchnoi not without difficulty (4½-3½). But now Hübner was 32 years old, at the height of his creative powers, playing confidently and tenaciously – and after six games he was leading: +2-1=3. In the 7th game – a French with 3 Nd2 – he obtained clearly the better endgame with a pair of powerful bishops. Korchnoi defended resourcefully, and on the resumption, in a sharp time scramble, he succeeded in equalising. A draw was now inevitable, but on the 63rd move Hübner suddenly missed a knight check and lost a rook!

‘Sensing blood’, he won the 8th game in a forceful and technical manner, and took the lead for the first time in the match: 4½-3½. This was the psychological turning point. The next game was adjourned in a roughly level ending, and then came the 10th game, which was also adjourned, but with an obvious advantage for Korchnoi.

The next day the media agencies announced to the world the sensational news that Hübner had refused to resume the game and had resigned the match! Yet the match was the best of 16 games, and the probable 6-4 score was by no means catastrophic. But after his tragic blunder of a rook, Hübner had apparently lost faith in himself ... At any event, despite all the difficulties, Korchnoi won his second successive Candidates cycle – previously this had been achieved only by Smyslov and Spassky. But to become a finalist also in two other cycles (1968 and 1974) – this had not been achieved by anyone!

It was also there in Merano that the next world championship match Karpov-Korchnoi (October-November 1981) took place. It should have started earlier, but the new FIDE President Fridrik Olafsson deferred the match for a month, ‘wishing to secure equal conditions for both contestants’, i.e. finally to gain permission for the Korchnoi family to leave the USSR. Nothing came of this, but a year later, in the election of the FIDE President at the Congress in Lucerne, the Soviet bloc countries refused to support Olafsson, and gave their preference to Campomanes ...

The Soviet authorities did everything possible to help Karpov fulfil the parting words which resounded from the lips of Brezhnev himself: ‘You’ve seized the crown, now hang on to it!’ This match was accompanied by an unprecedented patriotic campaign. Karpov was given the best trainers and all the help that could be provided by the state apparatus. The atmosphere of suspicion surrounding the battle in Merano can be judged from the fact that a Soviet delegation – including Karpov – went there a few weeks before the start of the match, to check the drinking water, climatic conditions, and the level of noise and radiation (this was revealed to the press by the chairman of the organising committee).

The public was staggered by the ten enormous containers brought to the match by the Karpov team. Pictures of these appeared in the Italian newspapers under garish headlines, such as ‘The Russians’ secret weapon?’ But Baturinsky explained that the experience of the more than three months spent in Baguio had been taken into account:

‘Who knows how long the present match will last? There is much that has to be provided. Card indexes, chess books, theoretical material, the results of the many days of preparatory work ... This part of the load can be considered a secret weapon. Also needed were medication, foodstuffs, sports equipment. And so it accumulated, a whole ton of goods.’

The match turned out to be not so tough as the one in Baguio. Although Korchnoi had been maintaining his vigour by playing in non-elite tournaments throughout the year, he no longer had the energy to oppose his thoroughly armed young opponent. They again played to six wins, and the start proved disheartening for the challenger – three defeats in four games! The cause of this was not even Karpov’s super preparation in the opening, but the openly poor play of Korchnoi, who not so much allowed himself to be outplayed, but rather outplayed himself. As it transpired, right from the start his blood pressure jumped and his eyes began to hurt and to water – this had never happened to him before.

Years later Viktor Lvovich recalled: ‘In Merano Karpov “with his comrades” (there were 43 such comrades, and as many as 70 at the end of the match) forced me to endure a nightmare.’ He was convinced that the latest achievements of Soviet intelligence had been used against him. ‘There is no doubt that Karpov’s people were sitting in the front row and using instruments to study my condition – pulse and so on. In addition, I was irradiated – either in the auditorium, or at the country house where I was staying.’ His press attaché Emmanuel Sztein also thought that ‘in Merano there was something sinister’, and he described in an interview how he had come across three strangers in his hotel room, rummaging through his papers, and how one of them squirted something in his eyes, after which he lost consciousness and later had great problems with his blood pressure and his sight ...

Yes, police control and the activity of special intelligence services were a characteristic feature of several world championship encounters, beginning with the Spassky-Fischer match. However, I don’t know anything about secret instruments and the irradiating of one of the contestants. Therefore I can only confirm Korchnoi’s words, that during such matches all sorts of devilry occurs. And not least because a player’s nervous system experiences incomparable stress.

All the same, Korchnoi found in himself the strength to continue the battle, although at that moment it was not clear how he could change

the unfortunate course of the match. In the 5th game he unsuccessfully tried for more than thirty moves to win a rook endgame with four pawns against three on one flank. At that time I was playing in Tilburg, and I remember commenting in surprise: 'Why waste so much time? It's a dead draw!' But Petrosian and Spassky did not agree, and they explained to me the point of Korchnoi's tactics: on the day after such an adjournment session it is very difficult to play for a win with White ...

And the 6th game reminded the world of the former Korchnoi! Whereas in the 2nd game after 1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 he had replied with the modest 2 ... Nc6 3 Bb5 Nf6, and in the 4th he had altogether diverged with 2 ... Nf6, now, when there was nothing to lose, he decided to renew the theoretical duel, begun in Baguio, in his favourite Open Variation of the Spanish. It can be considered that it was with this game that the real match began – with a tense, uncompromising struggle and critical opening duels.

Game 35

A.Karpov-V.Korchnoi

World Championship Match, Merano 1981, 6th game

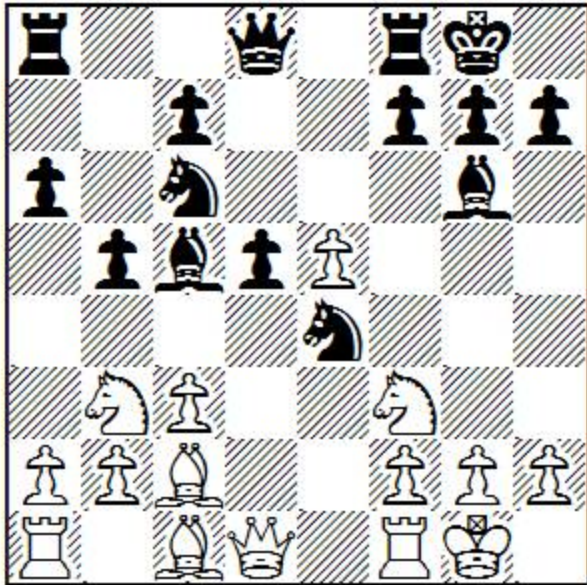
Ruy Lopez C82

1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bb5 a6 4 Ba4 Nf6 5 0-0 Nxe4 6 d4 b5 7 Bb3 d5 8 dxe5 Be6 9 c3

This game had such a strong influence on the development of opening theory, that after it players with White, beginning with Karpov, began increasingly often to prefer 9 Nbd2 (*Game Nos.85 and 86*).

9 ... Bc5 10 Nbd2 0-0 11 Bc2 Bf5 12 Nb3 Bg6!

Instead of 12 ... Bg4 (*Game No.75*), Korchnoi adopted a variation which had been studied back in 1955 by Geller and his second Bondarevsky in preparations for the match with Smyslov for the title of USSR Champion. Subsequently it was played by Savon, Yusupov and Geller himself.



13 Nfd4

If 13 a4, then 13 ... Bb6 14 axb5 axb5 15 Rxa8 Qxa8 (Tukmakov-Savon, 37th USSR Championship, Moscow 1969), or 14 Nbd4 Nxd4 15 Nxd4 Qd7! 16 Be3 Nc5 17 a5 Ba7 18 f4 Bxc2 19 Nxc2 f6 20 exf6 Rxf6 (Van der Wiel-Korchnoi, Wijk aan Zee 1983), in each case with equality.

13 ... Bxd4 14 cxd4

Little is promised by 14 Nxd4 Qd7!, when after 15 Nxc6 Qxc6 16 Be3 Rfe8 both 17 f4? Nxc3! (Korchnoi-Karl, Swiss Championship 1982) and 17 f3? Nxc3! (Speelman-Timman, 6th matchgame, London 1989) are bad for White. Or 15 f4 Nxd4 16 cxd4 f6 17 Be3, and now not 17 ... fxe5?! (Leko-Korchnoi, Leon 1994) on account of 18 dxe5, but 17 ... Rad8 with equality (Klovans-Dorfman, Moscow 1981).

14 ... a5 15 Be3 (15 f3 a4! or 15 Bd3 Qb8 16 Bf4 Qb6! is less good for White) 15 ... a4!

Previously this position was judged to favour White in view of 15 ... Nb4?! 16 Bb1 a4 17 Nd2! a3 18 Qc1! with the threat of bxa3 (Karpov-Savon, Moscow 1971).

16 Nc1

After 16 Nd2 a3 it is now bad to play 17 Qc1? axb2, when the d4-pawn is lost. The correct course is 17 Rb1 axb2 18 Nxe4 Bxe4 19 Rxb2 Qd7 (A.Ivanov-Yusupov, Frunze 1979) 20 Bd3! Bxd3 21 Qxd3

with pressure on the b-pawn and along the c-file. Here Korchnoi held his ground with Black against Hübner (Chicago 1982; Lucerne Olympiad 1982) and Lobron (Paris 1984), but Karpov with White defeated Yusupov (50th USSR Championship, Moscow 1983).

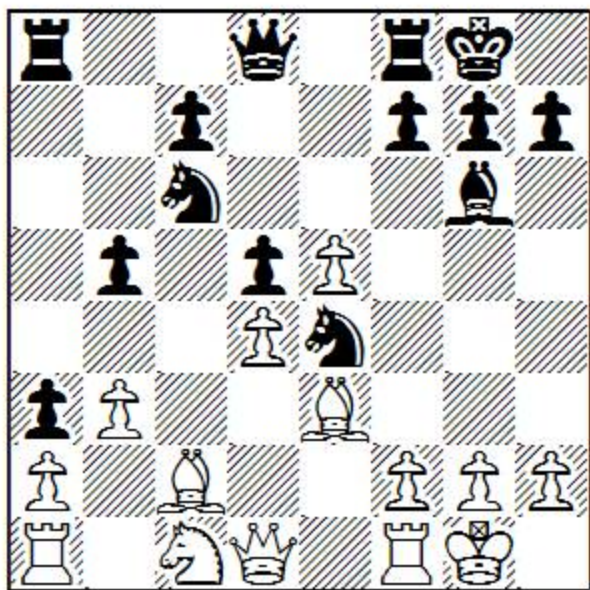
However, from the late 1980s they began answering 16 Nd2 with 16 ... f6!, for example: 17 Rc1 fxe5 18 Nxe4 dxe4 19 d5 Ne7 20 Bc5 Rf7 with equality (Ivanchuk-Grischuk, Rethymnon 2003).

16 ... a3

A useful inclusion – both for the middlegame, and for the endgame, where the weakness of the a2-pawn is especially sensitive. The immediate 16 ... f6 leads after 17 f3 (17 Nd3!?) 17 ... fxe5! 18 fxe4 (18 dxe5? d4! Voitkevich–Sideif-Zade, USSR 1981) 18 ... Rxf1+ 19 Qxf1 to very sharp play.

17 b3

If 17 Rb1, then 17 ... f6 gains in strength: 18 f3 fxe5! 19 fxe4 Rxf1+ 20 Qxf1 exd4 (Unzicker-Korchnoi, Beersheva 1984), while the attempt 17 bxa3 Rxa3 18 Bb3 Nc3 19 Qd2 b4 20 Nd3 is parried by 20 ... Bxd3 21 Qxd3 Qa8! with equality (Nunn-Marin, Thessaloniki Olympiad 1988).



17 ... f6!

Korchnoi did not arrive empty-handed for this encounter. The games Romanishin-Yusupov and Tseshkovsky-Geller (48th USSR

Championship, Vilnius 1980/81) went 17 ... Nb4 18 Bb1 c5, and in the second of these White gained an obvious advantage after 19 dxc5! Nc6 20 Ne2 Qe8 21 f4. On this occasion Black attacks the centre from the other side, without hurrying to occupy the b4-square with his knight.

18 exf6

‘Perhaps this move involves some oversight: now Black achieves a good game in the centre and on the kingside.’ (Geller). 18 f3 fxe5! 19 fxe4 (19 dxe5? d4!) 19 ... Rxf1+ 20 Qxf1 exd4 etc. is also unfavourable for White.

But not long before the match, the game Aseev-Dorfman (Saratov 1981) went 18 Nd3!? fxe5 19 Nxe5 Nxe5 20 Bxe4 dxe4 21 dxe5 Re8 22 Rc1 Rxe5 23 Qxd8+ Rxd8 24 Rxc7 Red5 with a slightly inferior ending for Black. An alternative defence is 21 ... Qxd1 22 Rfxd1 Rfd8 23 h3 (23 Rdc1!? is stronger – Wedberg) 23 ... Bf7 24 Rxd8+ Rxd8 25 Rc1 Rc8 with equality (Ivanchuk-Timman, Novgorod 1995).

18 ... Qxf6 19 Ne2 Nb4! (19 ... Qe7 20 Rc1 Nb4 21 Bb1 Rae8 22 Nc3 Nxc3 23 Rxc3 Bxb1 24 Qxb1 c6 is also not bad, Speelman-Timman, 4th matchgame, London 1989) **20 Bb1 Qe7**

A solid prophylactic move: Black inhibits f2-f3 and defends the knight at b4. 20 ... c5?! is premature in view of 21 f3 Ng5 (Nunn; 21 ... Nd6 22 Bxg6 and dxc5) 22 Qd2! Ne6 23 Bxg6 Qxg6 24 dxc5.

Geller thought that 20 ... Rae8 (Liberzon-Stean, Beersheva 1982) 21 Qc1 c5 was ‘far more active’, and if 22 Qxa3?, then 22 ... Nd2! However, after 22 f3! White’s chances are at least equal: 22 ... Nd6 23 Bg5 Qf7 24 Qxc5 and Qxb4, or 22 ... Qe7 23 Re1 Nf6 24 Nf4 Bxb1 25 Rxb1 etc.

21 Qe1

Soon afterwards Razuvaev recommended 21 Re1!? with the idea of f2-f3, but in the game Short-Timman (Erevan Olympiad 1996) this was met by 21 ... Nxf2! 22 Bxf2 Bxb1 23 Rxb1 Rxf2! 24 Kxf2 Rf8+ 25 Nf4!? (avoiding the draw after 25 Kg1 Qe3+ 26 Kh1 Nd3 27 Rf1 Rxf1+ 28 Qxf1 Nf2+ 29 Kg1 Nh3+) 25 ... Rxf4+ 26 Kg1 Re4 27 Qd2 Nd3! 28 Rf1 Rxd4 29 Rf3 Nf4! 30 Qf2 g5 31 Re3 Re4, and largely thanks to the strong a3-pawn Black has sufficient compensation for the exchange.

21 ... Rfe8 (21 ... Rae8!? Geller) **22 Nf4** (White has to play carefully: 22 f3? Nf6 23 Bd2 Nd3, and 22 Qc1? Nxf2! 23 Kxf2 Bxb1 with the threat of ... Nd3+ are both bad for him) **22 ... Bf7**

Rac8! 27 Qxb5 Nxe3 28 Rxc8 Rxc8 29 fxe3 Qxe3+ 30 Kh1 Rc1. White also has a difficult endgame after 28 ... Nxf1!? 29 Rxe8+ Bxe8 30 Qxd5+ Qxd5 31 Nxd5 Nd2, again because of the 'Achilles' heel' at a2.

24 ... Qf6

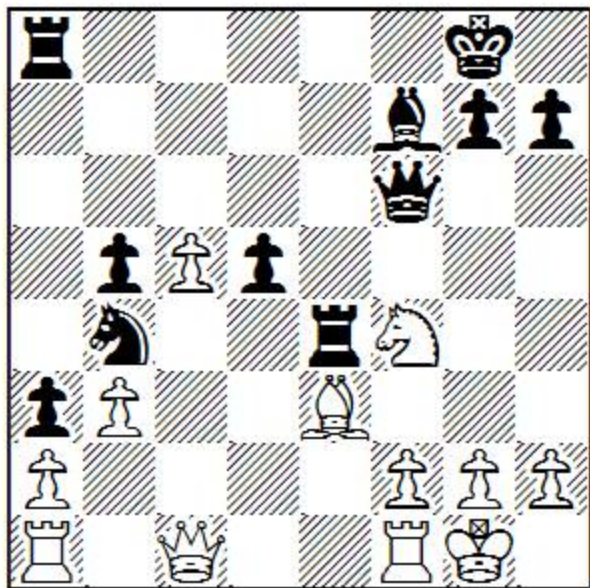
'Now there is a dispute for the d4-square.' (Hübner). At the same time, it is not so easy for White to coordinate the actions of his pieces.

25 Bxe4

After the clever 25 Qd1!? with the idea of 25 ... Qxa1? 26 Bd4 Qxb1 27 Qxb1 Nd2 28 Qf5 Nxf1 29 Qg5 Bg6 30 Nxg6 and wins (Nunn), or 25 ... Nc3?! 26 Bd4! Nxd1 27 Bxf6 gxf6 28 Rxd1, the simple 25 ... Rad8! could have followed, with sufficient counterplay.

25 ... Rxe4

Threatening ... Rxf4 and ... Nd3, as well as ... d5-d4.



26 Ne2?!

'According to Tal, initially the world champion had been planning 26 Qd2, in order to pin down the d5-pawn by the attack on the knight at b4, but then he did not like 26 ... Qb2. Although, after 27 Rfd1 Black has nothing significant, and merely compensation for the pawn.' (Geller)

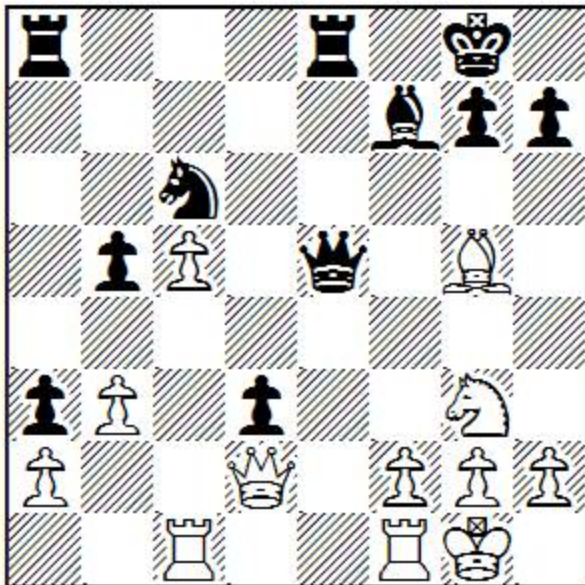
However, after 27 ... Rae8! this compensation is more than sufficient: 28 f3 Rxe3 29 Qxb4 g5 30 Nh3 Re2 31 Qg4 h6 or 28 Qxb2 axb2 29 Rab1 g5 30 Ne2 Bh5 31 Rxb2 Bxe2 32 Rxe2 d4 is

unfavourable for White, while if 28 g3, then 28 ... Nc6! 29 Qxb2 (if 29 Ne2 both 29 ... b4 and 29 ... Ne5 are good) 29 ... axb2 30 Rab1 d4 31 Bd2 g5 32 f3 R4e7 33 Nh3 Ne5 (or 33 ... h6 34 Rxb2 Bd5) 34 Nxc5 Bd5 etc. In all these variations White is obliged to defend against the opponent's pressure.

26 ... d4 27 Ng3 Ree8 28 Qd2 Nc6 (28 ... dxe3? 29 fxe3 Qh4 30 Rf4, regaining the piece) 29 Bg5 Qe5 30 Rac1

White does not want to give up his only trump – his extra c5-pawn. Geller gave the alternative 30 Rfe1 Qxc5 31 Ne4, 'returning the pawn and activating his forces', but after 31 ... Qd5 32 f3 Bg6 the advantage is with Black.

30 ... d3

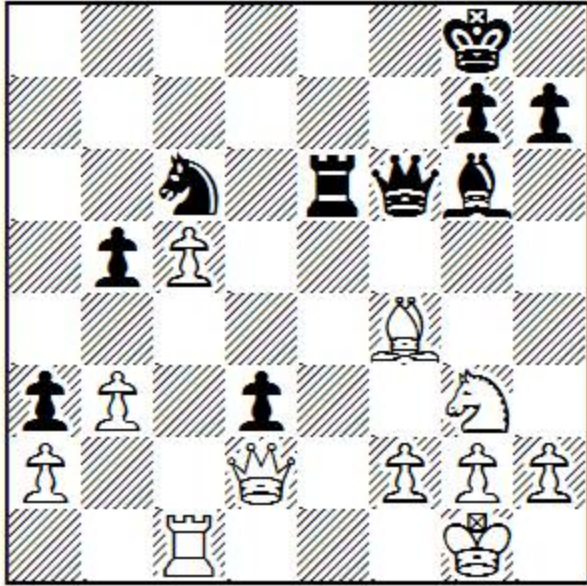


'Maintaining the initiative: now ... Qb2 and ... Nd4 are possible threats.' (Suetin). In addition, Black is not averse to seizing control of the e-file.

31 Rfd1

31 Rfe1 Qb2 (31 ... Qd5 32 Bf4) 32 Nf5 would appear to be better, but after 32 ... Rxe1+ 33 Rxe1 Re8 34 Rxe8+ Bxe8 35 f3 Bg6 36 Nd6 Nd4! the weakness of White's queenside would have caused him a mass of problems.

31 ... Bg6 32 Be3 Re6 (with the intention of ... Rae8) 33 Bf4 Qf6 (33 ... Qb2 34 h4!?) 34 Re1 Rae8 35 Rxe6 Rxe6



36 Rb1?

In a difficult position White prevents the invasion of the queen at b2. 'If 36 Rd1, then 36 ... Nd4 with the idea of ... Ne(c)2 is strong.' (Geller). Or 36 ... h5!? – this is also good after 36 Be3.

Probably the last chance was 36 Re1, in order after 36 ... Rxe1+?! 37 Qxe1 Qxf4 38 Qe6+ Kf8 39 Qxc6 to exploit the open position of the black king, for example: 39 ... Qd4 40 Qc8+ Ke7 41 Qb7+! Kf6 42 Qc6+, and nothing is given by 42 ... Kg5 in view of 43 Qf3! d2?! 44 h4+! Kxh4 45 Nf5+ Bxf5 46 Qxf5 d1Q+ 47 Kh2 (threatening 48 g3 mate) 47 ... Qxf2 48 Qxf2+ Kg5 49 Qg3+ with the better queen endgame for White.

36 ... h5!

Since Karpov has defended on the queenside, Korchnoi begins an attack on the kingside, threatening with gain of tempo to play ... h5-h4-h3 and seriously weaken the light squares in the opponent's position – in particular f3. 36 ... Nd4!? was also not bad.

37 h3

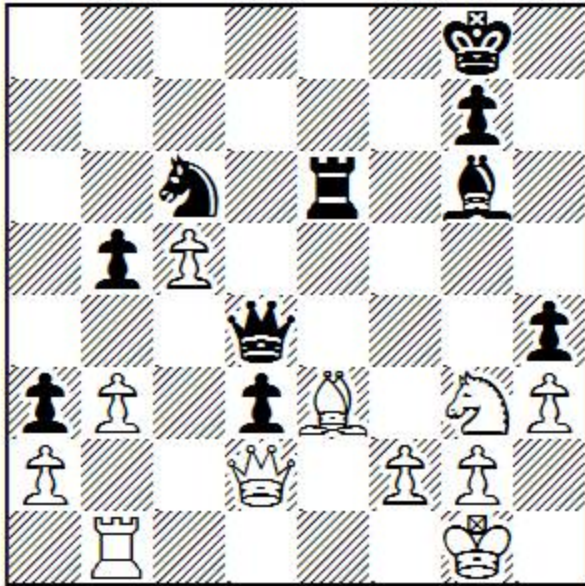
'An essential move.' (Geller). In the event of 37 Bg5 Qd4 38 Be3 Qe5 39 b4 h4 40 Nf1 h3 White's position is indeed critical, but now too it is unenviable.

37 ... h4

Korchnoi's customary time-trouble begins to tell. After 37 ... Nd4! 38 Be3 (38 Bg5 Ne2+! 39 Nxe2 Rxe2 and wins) 38 ... h4! (this is stronger than Hübner's recommendation 38 ... Nc2) 39 Nf1 Ne2+ 40 Kh1 Be4! 41 Nh2 Qe5 Black would have gained a decisive attack.

38 Bg5 Qd4 39 Be3

Karpov defends desperately, trying to confuse his opponent and somehow consolidate his position. And he almost succeeds in this!



39 ... Qd5?

A large advantage would have been retained by 39 ... Qe5! 40 Nf1 Qd5 (Nunn), for example: 41 f3 Nd4!, or 41 Re1 Be4, and if 42 f3, then 42 ... Bxf3! 43 gxf3 Ne5 44 Nh2 Rg6+ 45 Kf2 Rg3 46 Qd1 Rxh3 47 Rh1 g5 and White has no defence.

40 Nf1?

An error in reply. 'In his opponent's time-trouble White purely mechanically makes a move that was planned long ago.' (Geller). Whereas 40 Ne2!, threatening the fork Nf4, would have saved him from a rout and even, in the opinion of many commentators, given him winning chances. Although, in my opinion, after 40 ... Qf5! 41 Nf4 Re8 42 Rd1 Rd8 Black would have retained reasonable compensation for the pawn: 43 Nxg6 Qxg6 44 Qc1 (44 Bf4 Rd5) 44 ... Qh5 etc.

40 ... Be4 (Black succeeds in making his last move before the time control, which gives him an irresistible attack) **41 Bf4**

It turns out that after 41 f3 Black wins by 41 ... Bxf3! 42 gxf3 Ne5 43 Kh1 Rg6 or 43 Nh2 Nxf3+ 44 Nxf3 Qxf3 (Nunn) 45 Qxd3 Qg3+ 46 Kf1 Rxe3 47 Qd5+ Kf8!

41 ... Bxg2 0-1

Sealed. White resigned in view of 42 Ne3 Qf3 43 Nxg2 (43 Qxd3 Bxh3) 43 ... Re2.

The score was now 3-1 and the match situation became somewhat more complicated: Karpov temporarily 'lost' the white pieces. In the 8th and 10th games he played 1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bc4, and in the 12th – 1 c4, but all of them, as well as the 7th and 11th, ended in draws. During those days, on the directive of the Sports Committee, a group of grandmasters was urgently assembled at the Olympic training base in Novogorsk on the outskirts of Moscow, day and night analysing topical opening variations, including the Open Variation of the Spanish.

In the 9th game the champion employed a strong and unexpected novelty in the Queen's Gambit and accurately took advantage of his opponent's uncertain play (*Game No.84*). The score became 4-1 and, of course, few believed that a repetition of Baguio was possible: Karpov only needed to win two more games, and he still had ample strength (true, miracles sometimes occur: in his first match with me, he was even leading 4-0 after nine games!).

However, in the 13th game a warning signal sounded for the entire enormous Soviet team: Korchnoi scored his second win in the match in very good style.

Game 36

V.Korchnoi-A.Karpov

World Championship Match, Merano 1981, 13th game

Queen's Gambit D31

1 c4 e6 2 Nc3 d5 3 d4 Be7 4 cxd5

Before this in the match only 4 Nf3 Nf6 had occurred, and in the odd-numbered games from the 1st to the 9th Korchnoi did not obtain any real advantage after 5 Bg5 h6 6 Bh4 0-0, while in the 11th he did not achieve anything in a variation which had caused Karpov many unpleasant moments in Baguio – 5 Bf4 0-0 6 e3 c5 (cf. *Game No.30*).

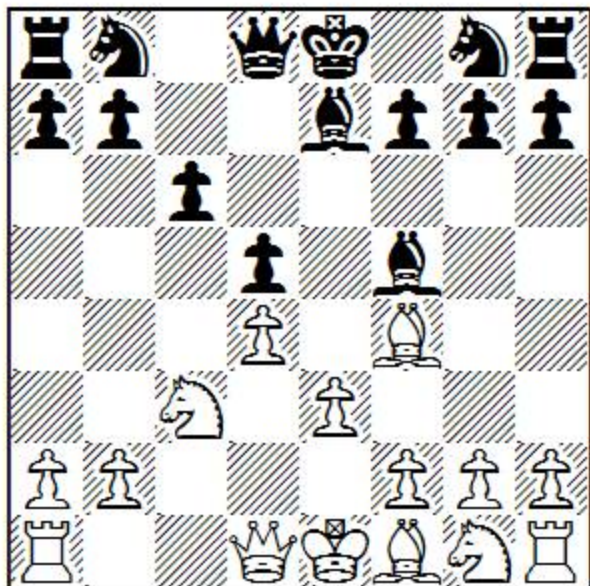
4 ... exd5 5 Bf4 c6

In the game Timman-Karpov (Bugojno 1978) after 5 ... Nf6 6 e3 0-0 7 Qc2 c6 8 Bd3 Re8 9 Nf3 Nbd7 10 0-0-0 Nf8 11 h3, having obtained

a favourable version of the Carlsbad structure, White was the first to begin an attack on the king.

6 e3 Bf5

6 ... Bd6 is more solid, but also more passive: 7 Bxd6 (7 Bg3 is scarcely any stronger, Botvinnik-Kurajica, Belgrade 1969) 7 ... Qxd6 8 Bd3 with a minimal plus for White (Gligoric-Portisch, Palma de Mallorca 1967).



7 g4!?

Following in the footsteps of Botvinnik, who successfully played this in his match with Petrosian (1963). It is interesting that in the resulting complicated position Korchnoi also succeeded in completely outplaying his formidable opponent.

7 ... Be6 (7 ... Bg6 8 h4!) 8 h3

The sharper continuation 8 h4 Nd7 (8 ... Bxh4?! 9 Qb3!) 9 h5 Qb6 (Botvinnik-Spassky, Leiden 1970) has already been described in Volume 2 (*Game No.71*), while 9 ... Nh6!? (Kasparov-Karpov, 21st matchgame, Moscow 1985) will be analysed in detail in Volume 7.

8 ... Nf6

It is not clear what can be bad about the quiet development of the knight, but at the same time Black has often experienced difficulties and many games have ended sadly for him. 8 ... Bd6 9 Nge2 Ne7 10 Qb3 is also considered to favour White (Korchnoi-Spassky, 2nd matchgame,

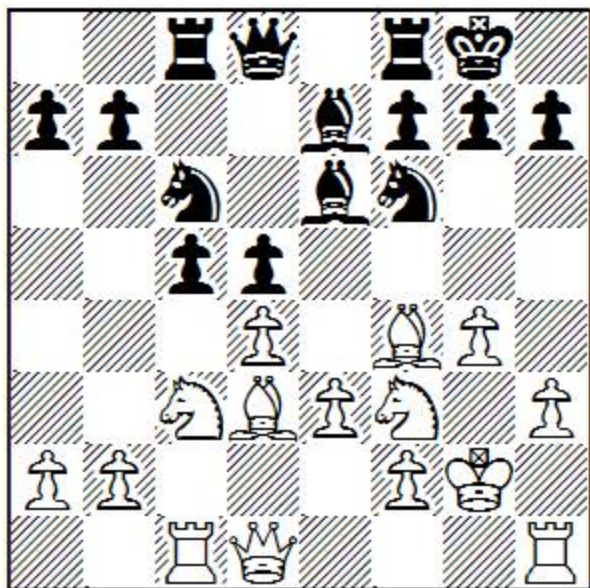
Kiev 1968). Therefore nowadays they prefer to initiate immediate counterplay on the kingside: 8 ... Nd7 9 Bd3 g5! 10 Bg3 h5 11 f3 (11 gxh5 Ngf6) 11 ... Qb6 12 Rb1 c5 13 Kf1 hxg4 14 fxg4 Nh6 15 Kg2 f5 16 Qf3 fxg4 17 hxg4 Nf6 with equality (Rustemov-Vallejo, Dos Hermanas 2003), or 11 ... Ngf6 12 Rh2 Nb6 and ... Bd6 with good play for Black (Krush-Bruzon, Buenos Aires 2003).

9 Bd3 c5 10 Nf3 0-0 11 Kf1! (one of those rare instances when artificial castling is more appropriate) 11 ... Nc6 12 Kg2 Rc8

Black does not fully equalise with 12 ... cxd4 13 Nxd4 Nxd4 (or 13 ... Bd6 14 Bxd6 Qxd6 15 Nce2 Rfe8 16 Rc1 Bd7 17 Bb1! Geller-Spassky, Moscow 1967) 14 exd4, as in the 14th game of the Botvinnik-Petrosian match (*Volume 2, Game No.71*).

13 Rc1

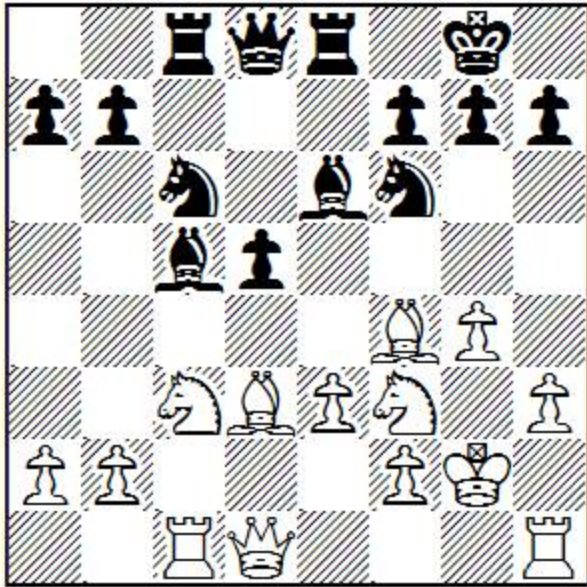
13 dxc5 Bxc5 (Bronstein-Kuijpers, Amsterdam 1968) is somewhat premature, since Black acquires the threat of ... d5-d4.



13 ... Re8?

It is hard to believe that such a natural move can be bad. Korchnoi, Keene and many other commentators recommended 13 ... a6. Indeed, in this case 14 dxc5 is no longer effective: 14 ... Bxc5 15 Nb5 Nb4! or 15 a3 d4 with equality. Karpov decided to maintain the tension, setting Korchnoi a comparatively new problem, but the latter copes with it impeccably.

14 dxc5! Bxc5



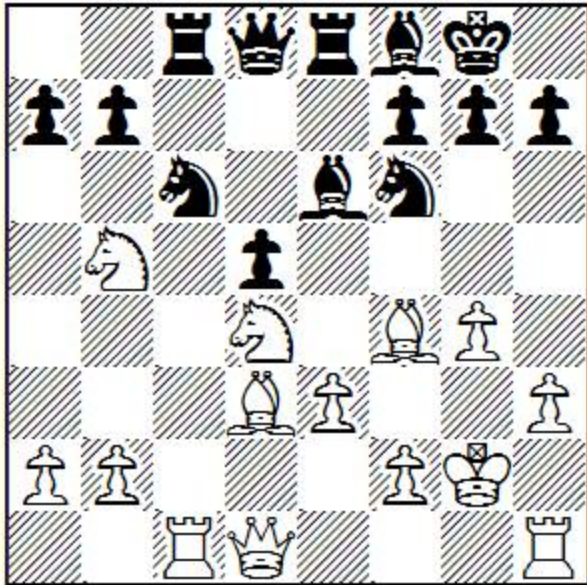
15 Nb5

White occupies the d4-square with gain of tempo and gains an enduring advantage thanks to his control of the centre, spatial superiority and greater activity of his pieces – in particular his bishops, which control the key diagonals.

It would appear that such a position with an 'isolani' should suit Black, since the white king is too exposed. But here the g4-pawn is not so much a weakness, as an outpost, restricting the mobility of the enemy pieces and creating the threat of g4-g5. In addition, White also has dangerous threats on the queenside, where his pieces are far better placed for action. And, strangely enough, Black is obliged to solve difficult and unpleasant problems: he has not even a hint of real counterplay.

15 ... Bf8 (15 ... Qb6? 16 Bc7 and wins, while if 15 ... Qe7, then 16 Ng5 is good) 16 Nfd4!

'Karpov had only been expecting 16 Nbd4 and now, uncharacteristically, he sank into thought for 35 minutes.' (Keene). Now Black must all the time reckon with the exchange Nxe6, which will rid him of his 'isolani', but will give him new weaknesses and strengthen the threat of g4-g5 followed by Qh5 and a terribly strong attack on the king.



16 ... Nxd4

It is a mistake to play 16 ... Qd7? 17 Nxe6 Rxe6 18 Bf5 or 17 ... fxe6 18 g5. 'According to the champion, he rejected the previously intended 16 ... Qb6 on account of 17 Qb3 Na5 18 Qa4 Bd7 19 Bf5 with the advantageous exchange of bishops.' (Geller). However, after 19 ... Bxf5 20 Nxf5 Rc4 21 Rxc4 Nxc4 22 b3 Nb2 23 Qd4 Qxb5 24 Qxb2 these advantages are slight. Tal and Geller parried 17 Qb3 with 17 ... Nxd4 18 Nxd4 (18 exd4 Rc4!) 18 ... Qxb3, thinking that after 19 Nxb3 White has only a minimal advantage.

However, after 16 ... Qb6 Korchnoi was in fact planning 17 Nxe6!, which also in my view was far more promising: 17 ... Rxe6 18 Nd4 Ree8 19 Qb3! and the white bishops dominate – Black faces a very difficult endgame, or 17 ... fxe6 18 g5 Nd7 (if 18 ... Ne4, then 19 Nc3! Nxc3? 20 Bxh7+ is strong, or 19 ... Rcd8 20 Qg4) 19 Qh5 g6 20 Bxg6 hxg6 21 Qxg6+ Kh8 (21 ... Bg7?! 22 Nd6! etc.) 22 Nc7 Re7 23 Nxe6 Qb4 (23 ... Qxb2 is weaker: 24 Bd6! Rh7 25 Rc2) 24 Nd4 (Korchnoi's move; 24 Rhd1!?) with a powerful attack.

16 ... Qa5 is no better, for example: 17 a3 Nxd4 18 Nxd4 Rxc1 19 Qxc1 Rc8 20 Qb1 Bd7 21 Rc1, and Black is condemned to passive defence, or again the energetic 17 Nxe6!? fxe6 18 g5 Nd7?! (after 18 ... Ne4 both 19 Bxe4 dxe4 20 Qb3 and 19 Nc3 are good) 19 Qh5! g6 20 Bxg6 hxg6 21 Qxg6+ Kh8 22 Nd6! (if 22 Nc7 Re7 23 Nxe6, then 23

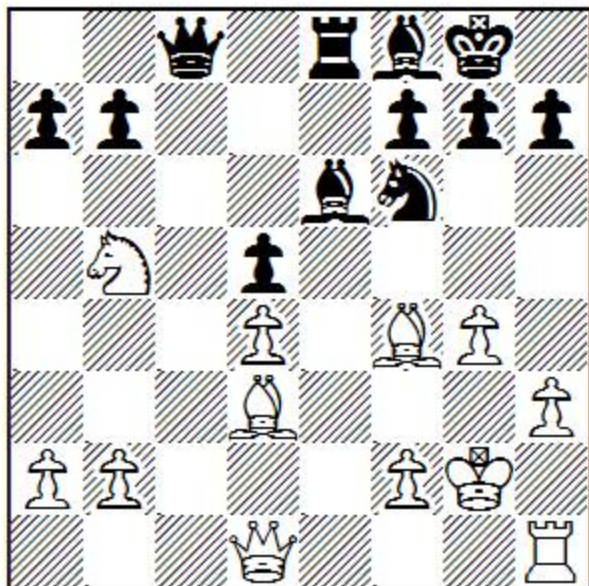
... Rce8!) 22 ... Bxd6 23 Bxd6 d4 (23 ... Qd8 24 Rhd1 or 23 ... Qa4 24 b4 is no better for Black) 24 Qh6+ Kg8 25 g6 Qd5+ 26 f3 Nf6 27 Rc5! Qxa2 (27 ... Qxd6 28 Rh5) 28 Rh5 Qxb2+ 29 Kg3 Nxh5+ 30 Qxh5 Rc7! 31 Bxc7 Re7 32 Bd6 Rg7 33 Bf8!! and wins.

17 Rxc8 Qxc8

If 17 ... Bxc8 again 18 exd4 is good, and then 18 ... Qa5 19 a3 with the ideas of Bc7 and b2-b4 (Korchnoi), 18 ... Qb6 19 Qb3, 18 ... Ne4 19 Qc2, or 18 ... a6 19 Nc7 Re7 20 Qc2 with unpleasant pressure which is hard to neutralise: 20 ... Rd7?! 21 Rc1 Bd6 22 Ne6 fxe6 23 Bxd6 Rxd6 24 Qxc8 (Korchnoi), or 20 ... h5 21 f3. In all these variations the difference in the activity of the white and black pieces is obvious.

18 exd4!

Perhaps Karpov was expecting the 'traditional' 18 Nxd4.



18 ... Qd7

If 18 ... a6 Korchnoi gave 19 Nd6, gaining the advantage of the two bishops, but 19 Nc7 Re7 20 Qc2 is also good. If 18 ... Qd8, then 19 Qb3, while Black also faces a difficult test in the ending after 18 ... Re7 19 Nxa7 Qa8 20 Nb5 Qxa2 21 Qa1! Qb3 22 Qa3 Qxa3 23 bxa3.

19 Nc7 (many pointed out the tempting alternative 19 Nxa7!? Ra8 20 Nb5 Rxa2 21 Qb3 and after the rook moves – Nc7 or Rc1) 19 ... Rc8

If 19 ... Rd8, with the idea of 20 Nxe6 Qxe6, then after 20 Re1! and Nxe6 all the same Black would have acquired a weak pawn at e6.

20 Nxe6 fxe6 (20 ... Qxe6? 21 Bf5) 21 Re1 a6?

The general opinion was that this was a serious loss of time, although it is already hard to offer Black any good advice: after 21 ... Bd6 (Korchnoi) the simplest is 22 Qf3, while if 21 ... Qf7 in the hope of 22 g5?! Nh5 and ... Nf4+ with counterplay on the dark squares (Tal, Geller), then 22 Qe2!

Karpov clearly underestimated the consequences of the exchange on e6 and sensed too late the danger of his position. He was thinking in the general terms of positions with an 'isolani' (inferior for Black, but defensible), whereas Korchnoi exploited the concrete features of the given position. The problems facing Black proved far more serious than at first sight, and in addition they began to snowball ...

22 g5 (beginning a decisive attack) 22 ... Ne4

After the passive 22 ... Ne8 23 Qg4 Rc6 24 h4 (Korchnoi) Black dies of suffocation. 'Therefore Karpov sharpens the play, and his idea proves justified.' (Geller)

23 Qg4!

In the event of 23 Bxe4 dxe4 24 Rxe4 Qd5 (Keene) the play would have enlivened somewhat, although after 25 Qe2! White would still retain an advantage (25 ... Qxa2 26 Rxe6). But now, strangely enough, no satisfactory defence is apparent for Black.

23 ... Bb4 24 Re2 Rf8 (24 ... Re8? 25 f3 Nd6 26 a3 Ba5 27 Bxd6 Qxd6 28 Bxh7+!) 25 f3!

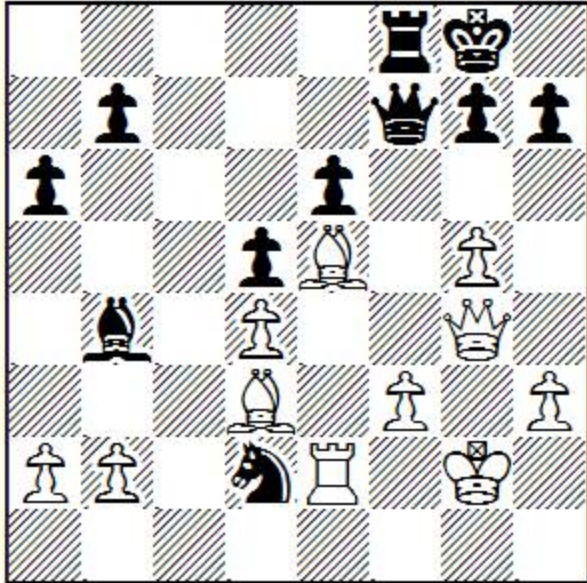
This is more effective than 25 Bxe4 dxe4 26 Bg3 and Qxe4 (Korchnoi).

25 ... Qf7

A desperate attempt to create counterplay along the f-file. If 25 ... Nd6 White would have won by 26 a3 Ba5 27 Bxd6 Qxd6 28 Qh5! g6 29 Bxg6 hxg6 30 Qxg6+ Kh8 31 Qh6+ Kg8 32 Rxe6.

26 Be5! Nd2

A crucial moment.



27 a3

Geller accompanied this move with two question marks(!) and subsequently Tal stated that 27 f4 would have given White a decisive advantage. But their variation 27 ... Ne4 28 Rxe4?! dxe4 29 Bc4 Re8 30 f5 is not convincing on account of 30 ... e3! with sharp play. The prosaic 28 a3 Be7 29 Bxe4 dxe4 30 Rxe4 would appear to be better. 27 ... Nc4 28 g6 Qd7 29 gxh7+ Kh8 is also not completely clear, although, of course, White has a big advantage. However, as we will see, 27 a3 wins by force!

27 ... Nxf3 28 g6?

An impulsive move, which throws away the win! 28 axb4? was even worse: 28 ... Ne1+ 29 Rxe1 Qf2+ 30 Kh1 Qxe1+ 31 Qg1 Qd2. 'But Black's clever attempt would have proved insufficient, had White played 28 Bg3! with the threats of axb4 and Rf2.' (Tal). Now 28 ... Be7 29 Rf2 or 28 ... Be1 29 Rxe1 Nxe1+ 30 Bxe1 is bad for Black, while if 28 ... Nh4+!? there are two worthy replies:

1) 29 Kh2 Nf3+ 30 Kh1 Bd2 (30 ... Be7 31 Rf2 or 30 ... Nh4 31 Bxh7+! Kxh7 32 Qxh4+ Kg8 33 Rf2 will also not do – Korchnoi) 31 g6 (this looks simpler than 31 Rf2) 31 ... hxg6 32 Rf2 Be3 33 Rf1 Bxd4 34 Bd6 and wins;

2) 29 Qxh4 Qf3+ 30 Kh2 Qxd3 31 Qg4! Be7 (not 31 ... Bd2 32 Qxe6+ Kh8 33 Bd6 Rg8 34 Rf2! with the threat of Qxg8) 32 Qxe6+ Rf7

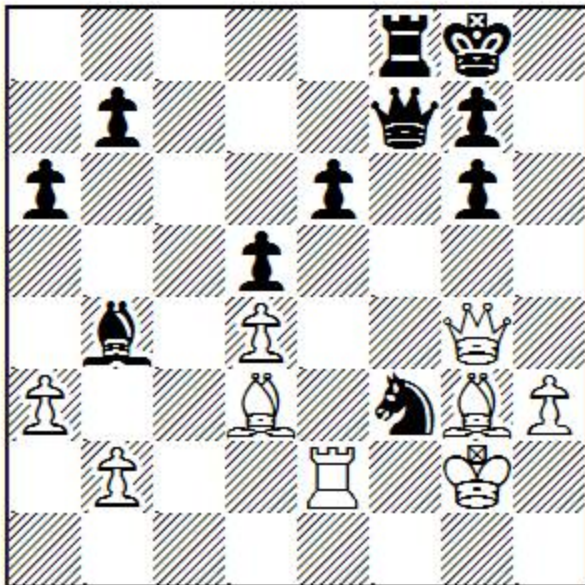
33 Rf2 Qg6 34 Qxd5 Kf8 35 Rxf7+ Qxf7 36 Qxb7 Bxg5 37 Bd6+ Ke8 38 Qc8+ Bd8 39 Qc6+ Qd7 40 Qxa6 and the win is merely a question of time for White.

28 ... hxc6

This saves Black. However, also after 28 ... Ne1+!? (not mentioned by anyone) 29 Kh2 Qe7! (29 ... Nf3+? 30 Kh1 hxc6 31 Bxc6 and wins) 30 gxc6 Kh8 one of the white bishops is exchanged and the position remains unclear: 31 Bg6 Nf3+ 32 Kh1 Nxe5 33 dxe5 Bc5 etc.

29 Bg3

29 Bxc6? is not possible on account of 29 ... Nh4+ or first 29 ... Qxc6. 29 axb4?! is also weak: 29 ... Ne1+ 30 Rxe1 Qf2+ 31 Kh1 Qxe1+ etc.



29 ... Be7?

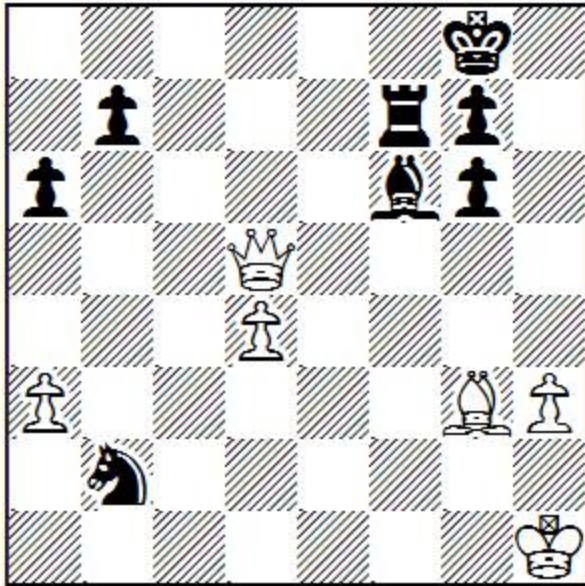
The fatal mistake. After 29 ... Ne1+? 30 Rxe1 Bxe1 31 Bxe1 the two bishops would have decided the outcome in White's favour. However, as all the commentators pointed out, after 29 ... Nh4+! 30 Kh2 Nf3+ 31 Kh1 the paradoxical return 31 ... Nh4!! would have forced a draw: 32 Rf2? Nf5, 32 Rc2? Qf3+! and 32 Bxh4? Qf1+! are all bad for White, while if 32 Qxh4 (32 Kh2 Nf3+) there can follow either 32 ... Qf3+ 33 Rg2 Qxd3 34 axb4 Rf1+ 35 Rg1 (35 Kh2 Qd1) 35 ... Qf3+ 36 Kh2 Qe2+ 37 Rg2 Qd1 with a draw (Korchnoi), or 32 ... Be7!? 33 Qg4 Qf3+, regaining the piece with equality.

30 Rf2

Now Black suffers great loss of material, and soon the challenger obtains a technically won endgame.

30 ... Ne1+ 31 Kh1 Qxf2 (not 31 ... Nf3? 32 Bxg6 Qf6 33 Qh5) 32 Bxf2 Nxd3 33 Qxe6+ Rf7 34 Bg3 Nxb2 35 Qxd5 Bf6

35 ... b5 (Korchnoi) was slightly more tenacious, but here too after **36 Qa8+ and Qxa6** Black is lost.



36 Bd6

‘The threat of Qe6 and Qe8+ forces both black g-pawns to make a step forward, and subsequently the creation of a well-known drawing fortress proves impossible.’ (Geller)

36 ... g5 37 Qb3 (forcing the win of the knight; **37 Qe4 g6 38 Qxg6+ Bg7 39 Be5** would also have won – Korchnoi) **37 ... Bxd4 38 Qe6 g6 39 Qe8+ Kg7 40 Be5+ Bxe5 41 Qxe5+ Kh7 42 Qxb2 1-0**

This last move was sealed. Without resuming the game, Black resigned.

The score became 4-2, and the Soviet authorities, deciding that the match situation was becoming sharper, declared a general mobilisation. Even I, an 18-year-old, was summoned by the Chairman of the KGB in Azerbaijan and handed a demand from Moscow: it was necessary to unearth some new ideas for White in the Open Variation of the Ruy Lopez! With this same aim, the head of the Sports

Committee chess administration, grandmaster Krogius, phoned Baku. I was told that it was my patriotic duty: the 'traitor' had to be smashed at any price. Not having any desire to work for Karpov, I replied that I didn't see any particular need for such assistance: as it was, Korchnoi was bound to lose. But they insistently suggested that I should 'think again'.

I remember that I consulted with Botvinnik, and he said Karpov could and should be helped, but only if he wasn't leading in the match. Fortunately for me, while I was 'thinking', others helped the Soviet champion and, by breaching the Open Variation in two games, the 14th (*Game No.85*) and the 18th (*Game No.86*) he confidently won the match: 6-2. Nevertheless, as I later found out, Karpov phoned Krogius and asked whether Kasparov had sent anything from Baku: he wanted to know what his potential rival thought ...

Korchnoi left the battlefield with a heavy heart: 'I endured Moscow, I endured Baguio, but Merano I could not endure. Therefore I gave my word: never to play a match with Karpov again,' he was to say ten years later. 'Not wishing to endure again that which happened to me in Merano, from being a professional I have gradually readjusted to becoming an amateur. Now I have no ambitions. I want to play interesting chess, and I am succeeding in this.'

Farewell to the Dream

In 1982 Korchnoi played in five tournaments and won three of them, but on account of the Soviet boycott he was again forced to miss the most important events of the year: Hastings, Wijk aan Zee, Mar del Plata, Sarajevo, Dortmund, London, Bugojno, Turin, Tilburg ...

In the autumn Viktor Lvovich headed the Swiss team at the Olympiad in Lucerne, and in the 10th round I first met him one-to-one. In general I was then playing on board two, with Karpov on board one. But the world champion diplomatically avoided a meeting with his implacable opponent: he would have had Black and, apparently, did not consider it necessary to take a risk. Besides, it was a convenient opportunity to 'put me up' against Korchnoi and see what came of this.

A very sharp battle in a Modern Benoni developed: I played extremely riskily, but in the end, after wild complications and mutual mistakes in time-trouble, I won – this duel will be annotated anew in the planned book of my selected games.

Incidentally, before the start of the game, disdaining the official ban, I made a movement towards my opponent to make the customary handshake. But Korchnoi declined – as I initially thought, remembering his bitter experience of Baguio and Merano, where a handshake was out of the question. But later it transpired that in Lucerne the three well-known chess defectors – Viktor Korchnoi (Switzerland), Lev Alburt (USA) and Igor Ivanov (Canada) had agreed among themselves not to offer to shake hands before a game, to avoid putting me in an uncomfortable position! At the previous Olympiad (Malta 1980) Karpov had ignored Alburt's outstretched hand, and this photo had been published throughout the western press ...

Korchnoi concluded that year with a short training match with Timman: 3-3 (+1-1=4). And at the start of 1983, just before the Candidates matches, he also played in Wijk aan Zee, where he was extremely uncompromising, but had his worst result for many years (+5-6=2). Nevertheless, he conducted the quarter-final match with Portisch (Bad Kissingen, spring 1983) as in the good old days.

The start of this match resembled the rout of Polugayevsky in Evian (1977). In the 1st game Korchnoi chose a rare variation of the English Opening, and although Black achieved good play (cf. *Volume 3, Game No.71*) Portisch used up nearly all the time on his clock, and was unable to hold a roughly equal rook endgame in time-trouble. In the 2nd game he obtained a typical 'anti-Grünfeld' ending, favourable for White, but with his inaccurate 36th move he squandered all his winning chances. It is probable that the burden of these mistakes affected Portisch in the 3rd game, which became the culmination of the match.

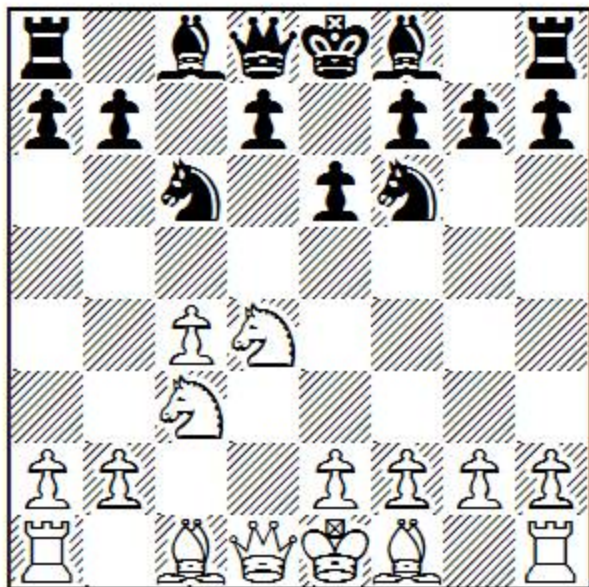
Game 37

V.Korchnoi-L.Portisch

Candidates Match, Bad Kissingen 1983, 3rd game

English Opening A33

1 c4 c5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 d4 cxd4 5 Nxd4 e6



This well-known opening *tabiya* has occurred about fifty times in Korchnoi's games.

6 Ndb5

Viktor Lvovich started out playing 6 Bg5. Then he employed 6 g3, including games from his match with Spassky (1977/78), and in 1988 Karpov played this against him. He also tried 6 Bf4 d5 (6 ... Bb4 7 Ndb5) 7 cxd5 Nxd5 8 Nxc6 bxc6 9 Bd2, but in the end he gave priority to 6 a3 and with its help he won two important games in his matches with Sax (Wijk aan Zee 1991) and Ponomarev (Donetsk 2001).

Indeed, 6 a3!? enables the maximum number of pieces to be retained on the board and lengthy forcing lines to be avoided. I too successfully employed this move on one occasion – against Van Wely (Moscow 2004).

6 ... d5!

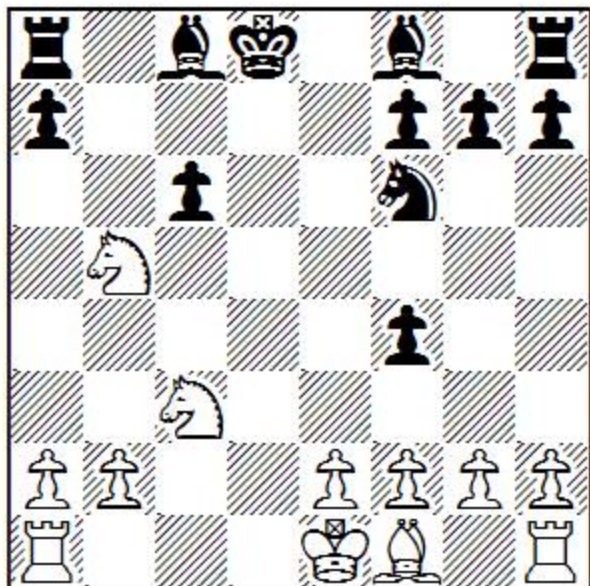
In the Korchnoi-Polugayevsky Candidates match (1980) 6 ... Bb4 7 Bf4 0-0 was tried, followed by 8 Bc7 Qe7 9 Bd6 Bxd6 10 Qxd6 (1st and 5th games) or 8 Bd6 Bxd6 9 Nxd6 (7th, 9th and 13th). By gaining control of the d6-square, White obtains a slight but enduring advantage, which was confirmed by Korchnoi's wins over Andersson (Johannesburg 1981) and Y.Gruenfeld (Lucerne 1982).

7 Bf4!

In the event of 7 cxd5 Nxd5 8 Nxd5 (8 e4 Nxc3 9 Qxd8+ Kxd8 10 Nxc3 Bc5 is equal) 8 ... exd5 9 Qxd5 Bb4+ 10 Bd2 Be6 11 Qxd8+ Rxd8 or 10 ... Qe7 (Suba-Portisch, Thessaloniki Olympiad 1984; Ljubojevic-Topalov, Monaco blindfold 1999) Black has excellent compensation for the sacrificed pawn.

7 ... e5 8 cxd5 exf4 9 dxc6 bxc6 10 Qxd8+ Kxd8

A popular variation at that time.



'I have devoted many days and nights to the analysis of this position,' writes Korchnoi. 'Working either alone, or with various helpers – Stean, Velimirovic and Gutman – I have spent at least 80 working hours trying to refute the opinion of theory, that the chances are roughly equal. At first sight, things seem bad for Black. His king is in the centre, and his queenside pawns are weak. But it turns out that White has problems with the development of his kingside, whereas Black can freely develop his forces, at the same time creating threats on the queenside and in the centre. If one casts a brief glance at the position, the first move that comes to mind is 11 0-0-0+, but after 11 ... Bd7 the threat of ... Ng4 is very unpleasant. So that, according to theory, the only sensible move for White is 11 Rd1+, but the 80 hours of work at home had not convinced me of the strength of this theoretical move! After thinking at the board for 20 minutes, I played differently.'

11 Nd4!?

For Portisch, who devoutly reveres the theoretical canons, this was an unpleasant surprise! White abruptly changes the direction of the play: the knight, which usually aims for d6, now attacks the c6-pawn, and the rook, which has remained at a1, is ready to support this attack from c1.

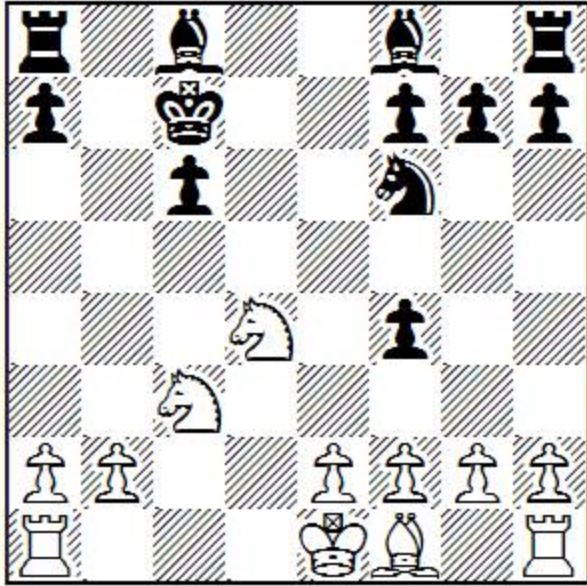
Korchnoi's decision is also interesting from the psychological point of view: it is well known that Portisch would often become flustered when there was a sharp change in the situation on the board. In general this is a problem for the majority of players who devote a lot of time to the study of the opening: they feel very much at home in 'their' set-ups, but began to 'drift' in unfamiliar positions. Korchnoi keenly sensed the moments when he could advantageously deviate from theory – such a novelty, even though objectively not very strong, had the maximum psychological effect. An ability to vary the character of the play to take account of the individual features of the opponent, which is doubly valuable in matches, was always one of his strong points.

Incidentally, in the same match Korchnoi later reverted to the usual line: 11 Rd1+ Bd7 12 Nd6, and instead of the passive 12 ... Ke7?! 13 g3! (Polugayevsky-Gligoric, Bugojno 1982) or the risky 12 ... Rb8?! 13 Nxf7+ (Andersson-Timman, Bugojno 1982) in the 5th game there followed 12 ... Nc7 13 Nxf7 Rg8 14 Ne5 (14 g3 Rb8! Andersson-Tal, 2nd matchgame, Malmö 1983) 14 ... Rb8 with quite good play for the pawn, and in the 7th – 12 ... Bxd6 13 Rxd6 Rb8! 14 b3 (14 Rd2 Re8 15 g3 f3 with equality, Karpov-Polugayevsky, London 1984; H.Olafsson-Portisch, New York 1984) 14 ... Rb4 15 g3 Ke7 16 Rd2 c5 with equality (16 ... h5!? Kir.Georgiev-Topalov, Sarajevo 2000).

11 ... Kc7

A seemingly natural move, but analysts considered the king's position on the c-file to be dangerous (because of the resource Rc1), and since that time Black began playing 11 ... Bd7, as chosen by Timman and Polugayevsky against Andersson (Tilburg 1983), or 11 ... Bb7, as played by De Firmian and Karpov against Salov (Amsterdam 1996; Dos Hermanas 1997).

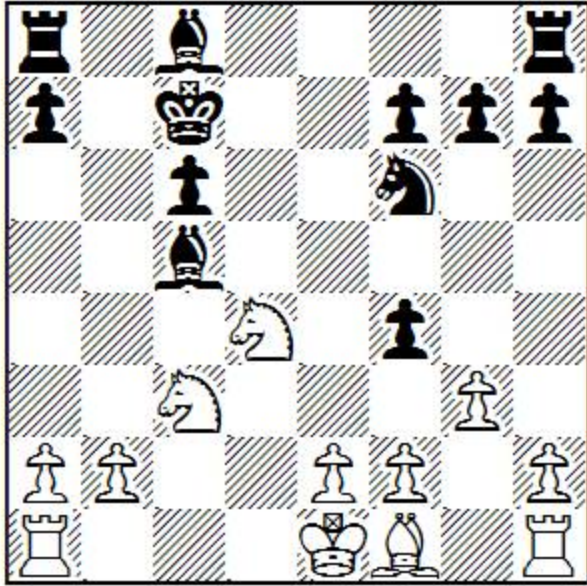
Thus on the whole the variation with 6 ... d5! has successfully passed the endurance test. But Korchnoi's brilliant 'psychological' victory remains one of the masterpieces in chess history ...



12 g3 Bc5?!

This strengthens White's tactical threats along the c-file. 12 ... Bb4 was safer, 'followed by ... Bxc3 – in order to block this file,' (Korchnoi), and if 13 Rc1, then 13 ... Rd8!

But 12 ... Rb8! was even better, and since White cannot get away with 13 0-0-0 or 13 Nb3, Korchnoi recommended 'the sharper continuation 13 Bg2 Rxb2 14 Rc1 followed by 0-0 with compensation for the pawn.' However, in my view, after 14 ... fxg3 15 hxg3 (15 Ncb5+? Kb6) 15 ... c5 16 Na4 (16 Ndb5+? Kb8) 16 ... Rxa2 17 Nxc5 Bxc5 18 Rxc5+ Kd6 19 Rc6+ Ke7 or 19 Rg5 Rg8 20 Rh4 h6 the compensation is clearly inadequate.



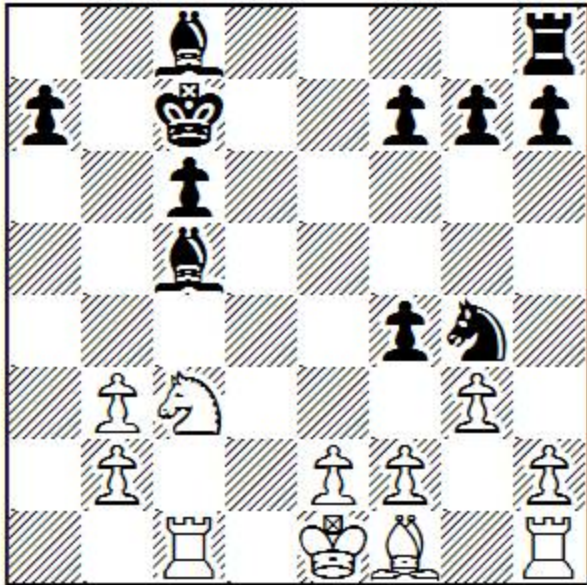
13 Rc1! (possibly Portisch was expecting 13 Nb3 Bb4 with equality)

13 ... fxg3

This eliminates the threat of gxf4, but, on the other hand, it opens the file for the rook at h1. Korchnoi considers two other possibilities:

1) 13 ... Ng4 'with the threat of seizing the initiative by ... Nxf2.' However, if 14 Bg2 Black must play 14 ... Rb8!, since 14 ... Nxf2? does not work in view of 15 Ncb5+! But Korchnoi was planning the gambit 14 b4!? Bxb4 15 Bg2 and 0-0 with somewhat the better chances for White;

2) 13 ... Rb8 (taking control of the b5-square and threatening ... Bxd4) 14 Nb3 Rxb3!? 15 axb3 Ng4.



Analysis diagram

At the board White had been intending to play 16 Nd5+ Kd6 17 Rxc5 Kxc5 18 Nxf4 Kb4 19 Nd3+ Kxb3 20 Kd2! Rd8 21 Kc1 'with some advantage', although the position is probably a draw.

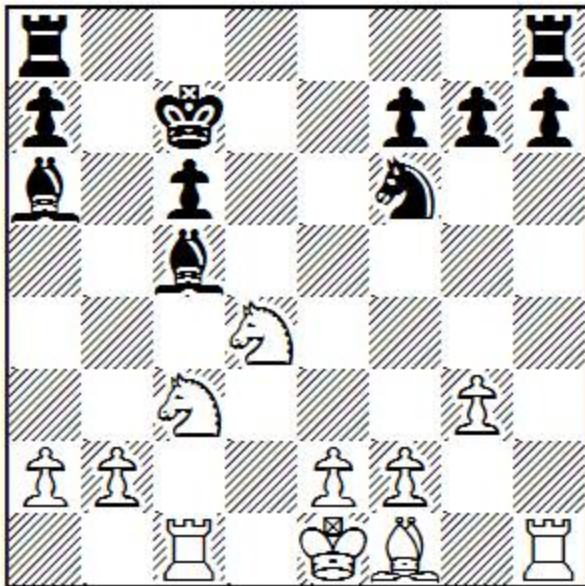
Later, in analysis at home, Korchnoi 'discovered that after 17 Rxc5 Black can interpose the unexpected 17 ... fxc3!!, threatening by ... Nxf2 and then ... gxh2 to win the other rook,' and he came to the conclusion that 'my variation, prepared at the board, would not have worked.' 18 hxc3?! Kxc5 is indeed weak, but it is better to keep the exchange advantage by 18 Ra5!, when Black faces a struggle for a draw after both 18 ... gxf2+ 19 Kd2 cxd5 20 Bg2 Be6 21 h3, and 18 ... Nxf2 19 Bg2 Nxf1 20 Ne3 Nf2 21 hxc3 Ng4 22 Nc4+ Ke6 23 Bxc6 a6 or 20 ... Be6 21 Bxf1 gxh2.

The alternative is 16 Bg2 Bxf2+ 17 Kf1, when 'Black has no satisfactory retreat for his bishop in view of the knight check at b5 or d5, and on his next move White will play Nd1, retaining a slight material advantage. Hardly a decisive one, however ... ' (Korchnoi). Although, in my opinion, after 17 ... fxc3 18 hxc3 Bd7! (but not 18 ... Bxc3 19 Bxc6! with the idea of 19 ... Kxc6 20 Ne4+ and Nxg3) it is hard to talk about any advantage at all for White.

14 hxc3 Ba6?

Portisch cracks under the strain! Yet he only needed to play 14 ... Rb8, in order after 15 Nb3 (nothing is achieved by 15 Nd5+ Kd6 16 Nxf6 Bxd4 17 Ne4+ Kc7) 15 ... Bb4 16 Bg2 Bd7, in the words of Korchnoi, 'to safeguard himself against White's threats and set up a long-term defence.'

Summing up the impressions of Black's 11th-14th moves (the critical phase of the game), it can be stated that he missed several safer continuations, and also some sharper ones, exploiting the dynamic features of the position – such as the presence of the pawn at f4 and the possibility of attacking the f2- and b2-pawns. However, the only move that genuinely deserves to be criticised is the 'careless', as Korchnoi defined it, 14th, after which Black's position collapses literally like a house of cards.



15 Nxc6!

'This unexpected move wins the game. And effectively, not only this game, but also the entire match! Indeed, Portisch was unable to recover from this blow and he lost the match 6-3!' (Korchnoi)

15 ... Bb7 (or 15 ... Kxc6 16 Na4 with an irresistible attack, in which the decisive role is played by the inclusion of the rook from h1) **16 Na4!**

All the same! 'Of course, not 16 Bg2? Bxc6 17 Bxc6 Bxf2+ and Black regains the pawn,' (Korchnoi), although even here after 18 Kxf2 Ng4+ 19 Kg2 Kxc6 20 Rh5! White would have retained the initiative.

16 ... Bxf2+

'If 16 ... Bxc6 17 Rxc5 Kd6 18 Rxc6+ Kxc6 19 Bg2+ Kd6 20 Bxa8 Rxa8 21 Rh4, and the win for White should not present any great difficulty.' (Korchnoi)

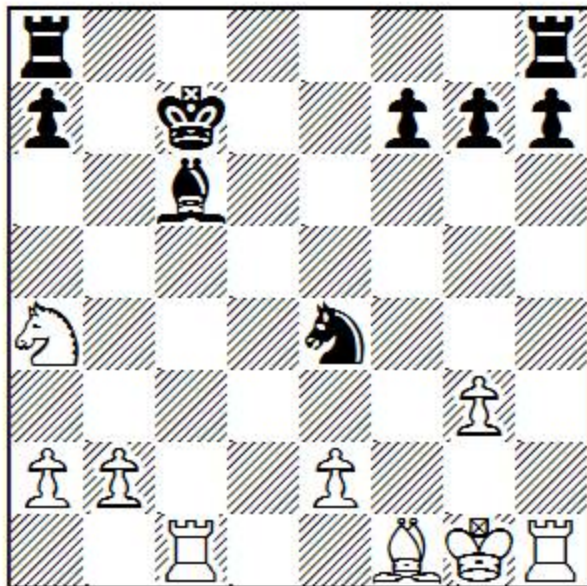
17 Kxf2 Ne4+

17 ... Bxc6 was also hopeless: 18 Bg2 Ng4+ 19 Kg1 Ne5 20 Rh5! (using all the space of the chessboard) 20 ... Kd6 21 Rd1+ Kc7 22 Rxe5 Bxa4 23 Rd4 Rae8 24 Ra5 (Korchnoi), or more quickly – 23 Re7+ Kb6 24 Rb7+ Ka6 25 Rd6+.

18 Kg1

White could have won quite simply by 18 Ke3 Bxc6 19 Bg2 (as well as 19 Rxc6+ Kxc6 20 Kxe4) 19 ... f5 (19 ... Rae8 20 Rxc6+) 20 Rhf1 Rhf8 (20 ... g6 21 Bxe4 fxe4 22 Rf6) 21 Rxc6+ Kxc6 22 Rxf5 Rxf5 23 Bxe4+ Rd5 24 Nc3 – pretty geometry! However, the retreat to g1 does not spoil anything.

18 ... Bxc6



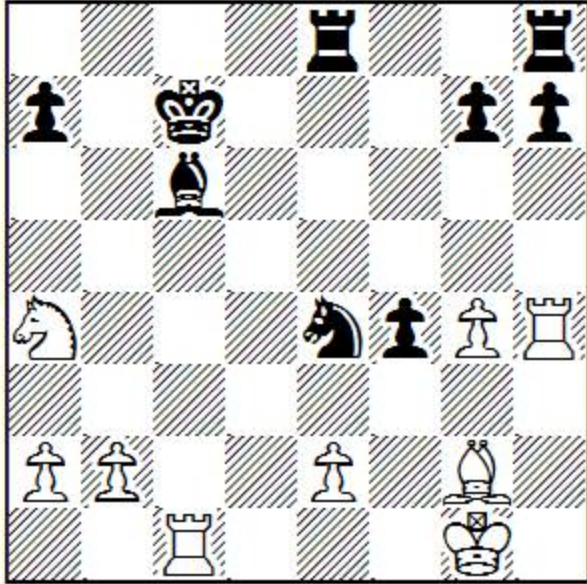
Black has temporarily restored material equality, but after the following obvious move further losses for him are inevitable.

19 Bg2 Rae8 (if 19 ... f5, then 20 g4 g6 21 gxf5 gxf5 22 Rh6, winning the bishop) **20 Rh4! f5 21 g4!**

Precise geometrical motifs. As in many other games of his mature and later period, Korchnoi displays an excellent vision of the board.

21 ... f4

Or 21 ... Kd6 22 Rxc6+ Kxc6 23 gxf5 Kb5 24 Bxe4 Kxa4 25 Bc6+ Ka5 26 Bxe8 Rxe8 27 Rxh7 and wins (Korchnoi).



22 Rxc6+!

Winning two pieces for a rook. 22 g5 was also good: 22 ... Rhf8 23 Rxh7! (but not Korchnoi's variation 23 Rxc6+? Kxc6 24 Nc3 f3! 25 Bxf3 Rxf3 26 exf3 Nxc3 with equality) 23 ... Kd6 24 Rxg7 Bxa4 25 Rc4 and wins.

22 ... Kxc6 23 Nc3 Kc5 24 Bxe4 Kd4 25 Bf3

White has a decisive material advantage, and the game quickly comes to a logical conclusion.

25 ... Rb8 (25 ... Ke3 26 Rh5!) 26 Na4 Rb4 27 Rh5! Rd8 (27 ... Rxa4? 28 Rd5+, mating or picking up the rook) 28 b3 (28 Nc5!?) 28 ... h6 29 Kf2 Rd6 30 Rf5 g5 31 Rf7! (with the threat of Re7-e4+) 31 ... Ke5 32 Rxa7 Rd2 33 Nc5 Rbd4 34 Ra6 Rd6 35 Ra5! 1-0

In the 4th game Portisch tried his utmost to draw level, and on the 33rd move he sacrificed the exchange, but in a sharp time scramble Korchnoi seized the initiative and immediately after the time control he built up an irresistible attack on the king. The score became 3½-1½! The outcome of the 10-game match was decided.

In the semi-final Korchnoi was drawn against me. In my preparations I quickly established that my opponent was still at the

cutting-edge of chess thinking, laying the main paths in the development of opening theory and generating new, original ideas or substantially refining old ones. This was also shown by our match.

Initially it was due to take place in the late summer in Pasadena. The intrigues which led to its collapse on account of my non-appearance, and those amazing events thanks to which the match nevertheless took place, are something that I will describe in Volume 7 (since this relates more to my struggle with Karpov). It could all have turned out differently, had not Korchnoi taken the noble decision to play the semi-final match, but exploited his formal right to go through to the final. However, he demonstrated in fact that his criticisms of the 'paper' championship were no empty words.

In September Viktor Lvovich arrived in Niksic in Yugoslavia, at the very time when I was successfully concluding a super-tournament there. Discussions about the match, sanctioned by Moscow, were initially made through an intermediary and proceeded with great difficulty. But the deadlock was broken when it was finally promised to Korchnoi that his main and lawful demand would be met – the termination of the boycott by Soviet players. As far as I am aware, an active role in these negotiations was played by two journalists: on the one side – Alexander Roshal, and on the other – the Yugoslav Brana Zrnec.

The repairing of our personal relations was helped by the blitz tournament in Herceg Novi, organised immediately after Niksic. I won this double-round event of nine grandmasters ($13\frac{1}{2}$ out of 16), twice beating Korchnoi, who took second place ($10\frac{1}{2}$). Possibly he was impressed by the fact that I played in the same tournament as him, despite the negotiations not being completed. For him this blitz event was the first breakthrough of the seven-year blockade! Several times we were able to talk openly about the forthcoming match, which we were both impatiently awaiting.

And soon our 12-game match became a reality (London, November-December 1983). The atmosphere surrounding it proved far calmer than expected. My relations with Korchnoi were normal. I realised that, despite the enormous age difference (32 years), he was a very dangerous opponent, with a mastery of numerous chess procedures. I knew that I must not allow him to dictate the play in simple and technical positions, and in my preparations I devoted

particular attention to a study of practical endings. In the match this was repaid with interest!

However, in the 1st game I lost ignominiously – this game, apparently for ever, has remained my only defeat against Korchnoi.

Game 38

G.Kasparov-V.Korchnoi

Candidates Match, London 1983, 1st game

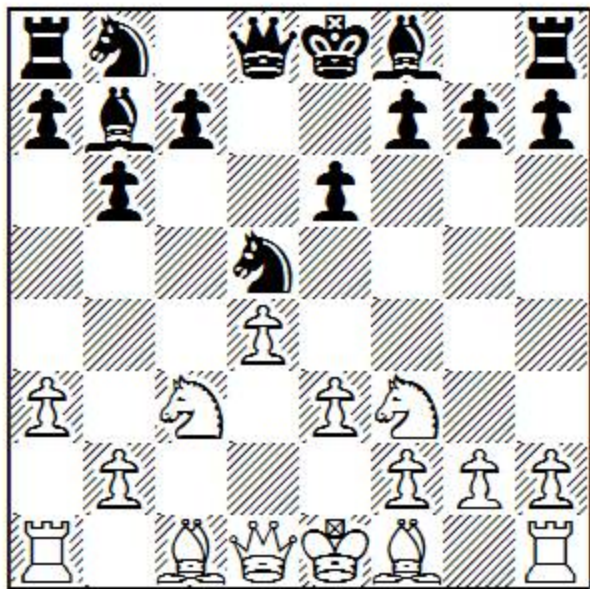
Queen's Indian Defence E12

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e6 3 Nf3 b6 (in those years Korchnoi more often replied 3 ... Bb4+) 4 Nc3 Bb7 5 a3

This move could have been expected: I used to play this regularly and very successfully. But in my opponent's games the position had occurred only two or three times.

5 ... d5 6 cxd5 Nxd5 7 e3

The more dynamic continuation 7 Qc2 has been described in the notes to the Petrosian-Smyslov game (*Volume 3, Game No.14*). I should add 7 ... Nxc3 8 bxc3 Be7 9 e4 0-0 10 Bd3 c5 11 0-0 Qc7 12 Qe2 Nd7 13 Bb2 Rac8 14 Nd2 Rfd8 15 Rfd1 Nf6 with approximate equality (Kasparov-Kramnik, Linares 2004).



7 ... g6!

A surprise! The usual line at that time was 7 ... Be7 8 Bb5+ c6 9 Bd3 (*Volume 3, Game Nos.14 and 45*). The new move 7 ... g6 was already known (it had been played by Short and Adorjan), but before this I had not studied it seriously. And I gave insufficient attention to the five-minute game Tal-Korchnoi (Herceg Novi 1983), which went 7 ... Nxc3 8 bxc3 g6.

The reply of my highly experienced opponent abruptly changes the pattern of the position: it leads to a kind of Grünfeld Defence, which was part of Korchnoi's armoury long before I was born (*Game No.2*). Now it is hard for White to build up a combined attack in the centre and on the kingside (which is precisely what I had been very successful with!), and he has to seek other paths. Korchnoi keenly sensed that I would become nervous – especially in the first game of the match – and that I would lose my aim. More than that: the effect of the surprise proved stunning!

8 Bb5+

Polugayevsky-Korchnoi (1st matchgame, London 1984) went 8 h4!? Bg7 9 h5 c5?! 10 Bb5+ Bc6 11 Bd3 Nd7 12 e4 Nxc3 13 bxc3 Qc7 14 Bg5! with an obvious advantage to White, but 9 ... Nd7 was safer.

Another line goes 8 Nxd5 exd5 (not so solid is 8 ... Qxd5 9 Qc2 Timman-Short, London 1982; Kramnik-Korchnoi, Monaco blindfold 1994) 9 Bb5+ c6 10 Bd3 Bg7 11 e4 dxe4 12 Bxe4 Ba6 13 Bg5 f6!? 14 Be3 0-0 15 Qb3+ Kh8 16 0-0-0 f5 with an unclear game (Atalik-Korchnoi, Manila Olympiad 1992) or 11 b4 0-0 12 Bd2 Nd7 13 Rb1 Re8 14 0-0 Nf6 with equality (Kasparov-Kramnik, internet blitz 2001).

8 ... c6 9 Bd3

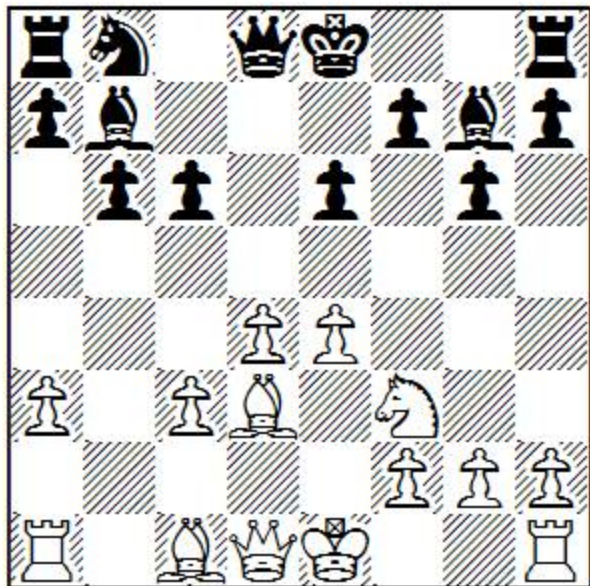
At the first attempt I played by analogy with the 7 ... Be7 variation, and at the second, against Timman (Amsterdam 1991) – 9 Ba4 Bg7 10 e4!? (instead of the usual 10 0-0 0-0 11 e4 Nxc3 12 bxc3 c5 13 Bg5 Qd6 with equality, Kupreichik-Makarichev, Kiev 1984; Radjabov-Karpov, Moscow rapidplay 2002) 10 ... Nxc3 11 bxc3, and after 11 ... Ba6!? 12 h4 Qc7 13 e5 Nd7 14 Bf4 h6 15 Qc1 0-0-0 16 Qe3 c5 17 Nd2 Kb8 a sharp battle developed, leading in the end to a draw.

9 ... Bg7 10 e4

White gains no advantage with 10 0-0 0-0 11 Nxd5 cxd5 (Tarjan-Adorjan, Vrsac 1983). From the mid-1990s, to play e3-e4 without allowing the exchange on c3, they began playing 10 Ne2?! (after which 10 ... c5! is strong) or 10 Na4. But it doubtful whether Black's defences

can be shaken in this way, as has been demonstrated in practice by Karpov, Short, Grischuk and Kramnik.

10 ... Nxc3 11 bxc3



11 ... c5!

A new, more energetic move than 11 ... 0-0 (Ftacnik-Adorjan, Banja Luka 1983). Black's fianchettoed bishops strike with great force at the opponent's centre – an excellent version of the 'Grünfeld'!

12 Bg5

It is pleasant to develop a piece with gain of tempo, but 12 Bb5+ Bc6 13 Bxc6+ Nxc6 14 Be3 (Ftacnik) or 12 Be3 0-0 13 0-0 was safer.

12 ... Qd6!

Black does not want to relieve the pressure on d4, rightly assuming that the win of a further tempo will not bring White any benefits.

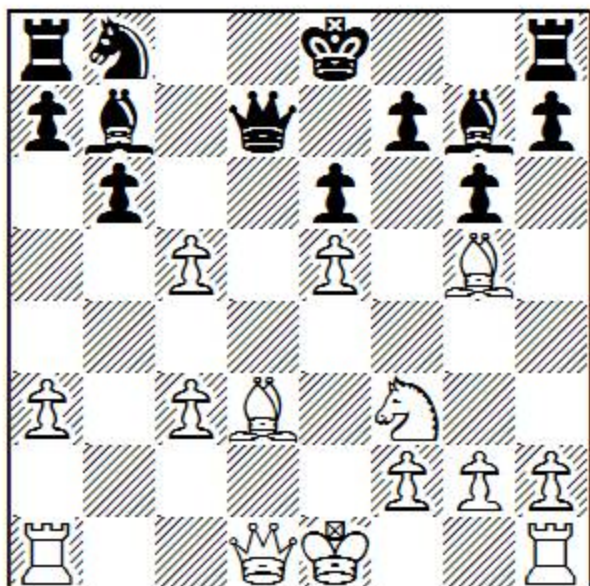
13 e5 (sooner or later it is impossible to get by without e4-e5) **13 ... Qd7**

13 ... Qd5 was also possible, but Korchnoi wanted to provoke me into making the following reply.

14 dxc5?

'This move is hard to understand.' (Korchnoi). And indeed, was it worth voluntarily breaking up my pawn centre, when after the simple 14 0-0 0-0 15 Qe2 cxd4 16 cxd4 Nc6 17 Qe3 or 17 Be4 White would not have been threatened with any danger? But I was already thinking of

rapidly relieving the situation, and, as often happened with me at the time, I underestimated the dynamic factors of the position ...



14 ... 0-0! (but not 14 ... bxc5 15 Bb5! Bc6 16 a4, and only Black may have problems) 15 cxb6 axb6 16 0-0 Qc7

Immediately taking aim at the c3- and e5-pawns and preparing to bring out the knight. After the hasty 16 ... Nc6? 17 Be4 Qc7 18 Bf6! Bxf6 19 exf6 Qf4 20 Qb1 (20 Qd7!? Dvoretsky) White would have seized the initiative.

'For the pawn Black has gained pressure on White's weaknesses and a successful development of his pieces. It is clear that White cannot hold on to his material advantage. But will he be able to disrupt Black's harmonious development?' (Korchnoi)

17 Bb5!?

White sharply changes the character of the play: immediately giving up the important e5-pawn, he tries to exploit the activity of his pieces and Black's momentary lag in development.

Initially I had been planning 17 Re1 with the possible sequel 17 ... Nc6 18 Be4 Ra5 19 Bf6 or 17 ... Qxc3 18 Be7 Re8 19 Bb4, but on closer examination I discovered an interesting exchange sacrifice for Black – 17 ... Nd7! 18 Be7 (18 Bf4 Rfd8 is too cheerless) 18 ... Bxf3! (18 ... Nxe5 19 Bxf8 Nxf3+ 20 gxf3 Rxf8 21 Be4 is not so clear) 19 gxf3 (19 Qxf3?! Nxe5 20 Rxe5 Bxe5 21 Bxf8 Rxf8, winning a pawn) 19 ...

Bxe5 20 Bxf8 Bxh2+ 21 Kg2 Rxf8, and White faces an extremely unpleasant defence.

By this point I had already used more than two hours, whereas Korchnoi's first 15 moves had taken him only four(!) minutes. True, on his next move he spent about 50 minutes ...

17 ... Bxe5!

This reply, exploiting the undefended state of the bishops at b5 and g5, sets White the greatest problems. 17 ... Bxf3?! 18 Qxf3 Ra5 19 a4 Bxe5 20 g3 Qxc3 21 Qxc3 Bxc3 22 Rad1 (Korchnoi) or 22 Rac1! (Dvoretsky) is clearly to White's advantage. Let us also consider quiet development:

1) 17 ... Nc6 18 Qd6 Bxe5 19 Qxc7 Bxc7 20 Rfd1 and Black's advantage is merely symbolic, or 18 Bf6!? Nxe5 19 Nxe5 Bxf6 20 Nd7 (Korchnoi) 20 ... Bxc3 21 Nxf8 (Dvoretsky also suggests the unclear 21 Rc1) 21 ... Bxa1 22 Nxe6 with equality;

2) 17 ... Na6 18 Bf6 Bxf6 19 exf6 Qxc3 20 Qd4 Qxd4 21 Nxd4 Nc7 22 Rfb1 with equality (Korchnoi), or 18 a4 Bxf3 19 Qxf3 Bxe5 20 g3 Qxc3 21 Qxc3 Bxc3 22 Rac1 with full compensation for the sacrificed pawn.

18 Bh6 (of course, not 18 Nxe5? Qxe5 19 Bh6 Qxb5 20 Qd4 e5 and wins) **18 ... Bg7?!**

Having obtained a permanently better pawn structure, Korchnoi wants to avoid any lack of clarity and to decide the outcome with the help of simplification and purely technical means (as it later transpired, this was the corner-stone of his match strategy).

18 ... Rd8! suggests itself, although this would have allowed a queen sacrifice – 19 Nxe5?! Rxd1 20 Raxd1, and if 20 ... f6?, then 21 Nd7! Nxd7 22 Rxd7 Qc5 23 Rg7+! Kh8 24 Rxb7 Qxb5 25 Bg7+ Kg8 26 Bxf6 with sufficient counterplay. Even so, after 20 ... Nc6 21 Ng4 Ne5! 22 Nf6+ Kh8 (Dvoretsky) or 20 ... Bc6!? Black could have parried the opponent's threats and gradually converted his material advantage.

Probably, all that remained for White was the patient 19 Qe2, for example: 19 ... Bxf3 20 Qxf3 Ra5 21 a4 Bxh2+ 22 Kh1 Rd5 23 g4! Be5 24 Rad1 with good compensation for the pawn, or 19 ... Bg7 20 Bxg7 Kxg7 21 Qe3 Bxf3 22 Qxf3 Na6 23 Bxa6! Rxa6 24 Rfb1 with an inferior but defensible position.

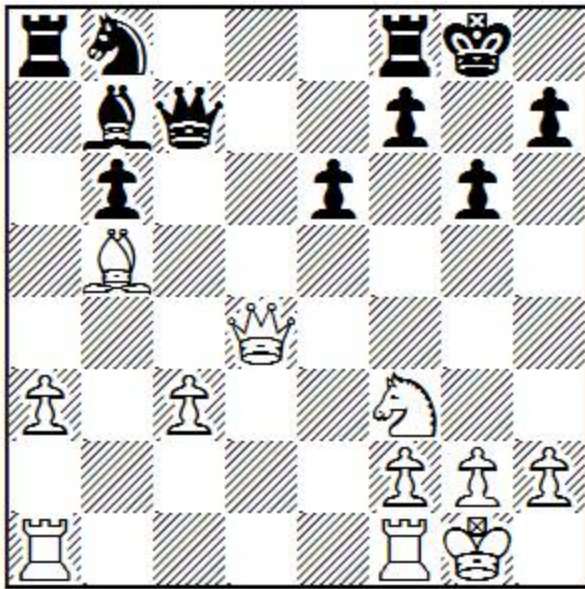
19 Bxg7 Kxg7

After the exchange of the dark-squared bishops White has gained an opportunity to create counterplay on the weakened dark squares.

20 Qd4+ Kg8

In the event of 20 ... f6?! 21 Ng5 Qe7 (21 ... Qc8? 22 Rae1 e5 23 Rxe5! and wins – Korchnoi) 22 Rae1 e5 23 f4 Black would have defended by 23 ... Nc6 24 Qxb6 fxe5 (Dvoretsky) or 23 ... Na6!? 24 Nf3 (24 fxe5 fxe5 25 e6+ Kh6 is insufficient) 24 ... e4 etc. But after 22 Nh3! (this move is also recommended by Dvoretsky) White, who is threatening Qxb6, would have retained some advantage.

At any event, a further weakening of his king's defences was not at all to Korchnoi's taste.



21 Ng5?

The choice of this incorrect route for the knight fully justifies Black's avoidance of complications three moves earlier.

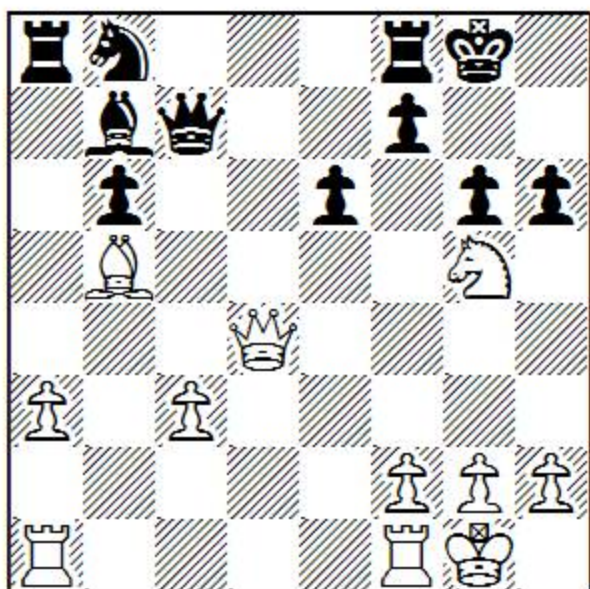
Only centralisation by 21 Ne5!, which involves a piece sacrifice, would have given an attack sufficient for at least a draw: 21 ... Rd8! (21 ... f6? 22 Nc4 or 21 ... Ra5 22 c4 Nc6 23 Bxc6 Bxc6 24 f4 is less good – Korchnoi) 22 Qh4! Rd5 23 Ng4 Rxb5! 24 Rad1! (unfortunately, I overlooked this strong reply; after 24 Nf6+? Kf8 the following are all bad for White: 25 Nxh7+ Kg7, 25 Qxh7 Nd7!, or 25 Qh6+ Ke7 26 Ng8+ Kd7 27 Rad1+ Kc6! Dvoretsky) 24 ... Rd5! (24 ... Nc6? 25 Rd7!; 24 ... Bd5? 25 c4! Qxc4 26 Rc1 and wins – Korchnoi; 24 ... g5 25 Nf6+) 25 c4! and now:

1) 25 ... Rxd1 26 Nf6+! Kf8 27 Rxd1 (27 Qh6+ Ke7 28 Ng8+ Ke8 or 28 ... Kd7 29 Rxd1+ Kc6 30 Qe3 Ra5 also leads to a draw – Dvoretsky) 27 ... h5 28 Qg5 Ra5 29 Qh6+ Ke7, and ‘nothing better than perpetual check can be found for White’ (Korchnoi);

2) 25 ... Rd6 26 Nf6+ Kf8 27 Qf4 (or 27 Qh6+ Ke7 28 Qh4 Kf8 with a draw – Dvoretsky) 27 ... Rc6 28 Qh6+ Ke7 29 Ng8+ Ke8 30 Nf6+ with perpetual check.

After missing this opportunity, White completely concedes the initiative to his opponent.

21 ... h6



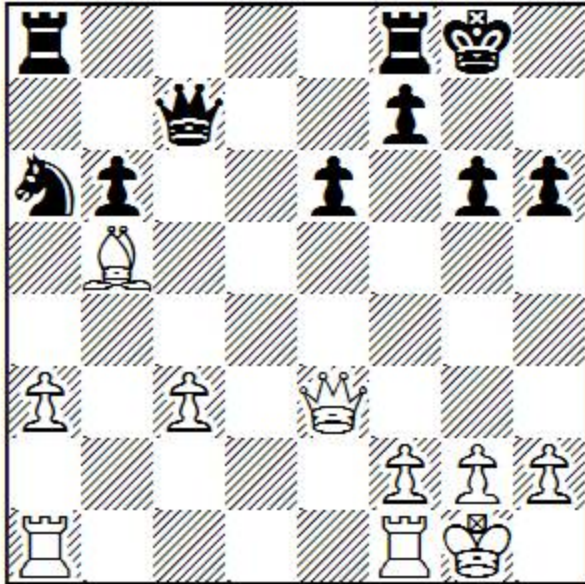
22 Ne4 Bxe4 (with the exchange of this powerful knight, all my hopes of an attack disappear) 23 Qxe4 Na6!

Simple and good. After 23 ... Nd7 White would have been saved by the double attack 24 Bxd7 Qxd7 25 Qe3, whereas now he has to choose the lesser of two evils.

24 Qe3?!

Again a weak move. The black knight clearly has better prospects than the white bishop, and after 24 Bxa6! Rxa6 25 Qe3 ‘Black’s advantage would have been merely theoretical’ (Korchnoi). At the board I did not like 25 ... Rfa8! (25 ... Kg7 26 Rfb1) 26 Qxh6?! Rxa3 27 Rxa3 Rxa3 28 h4 Qxc3 29 h5 Ra1 30 hxg6 Rxf1+ 31 Kxf1 Qd3+ 32 Kg1 Qb1+ 33 Kh2 Qxg6, when Black probably has a won queen

ending. And if 26 Rfb1 (26 Rab1!?) 26 ... Rxa3 27 Rxa3 Rxa3 28 g3 (Dvoretsky), then 28 ... b5!, successfully avoiding the endgame with four pawns against three on one wing. But the passive 25 Qb4 Rc8 26 Rfc1 would have left White good chances of a draw.



24 ... Qc5!

Another unpleasant surprise. I was expecting 24 ... h5 25 Bxa6 Rxa6 26 Rfb1 Rfa8 27 Rb3. But now things are far more difficult for White, since Black, by retaining his knight, obtains additional possibilities of fighting for an advantage. In such a situation it is easy to slip up, especially when feeling grieved by the unsuccessful outcome of the opening.

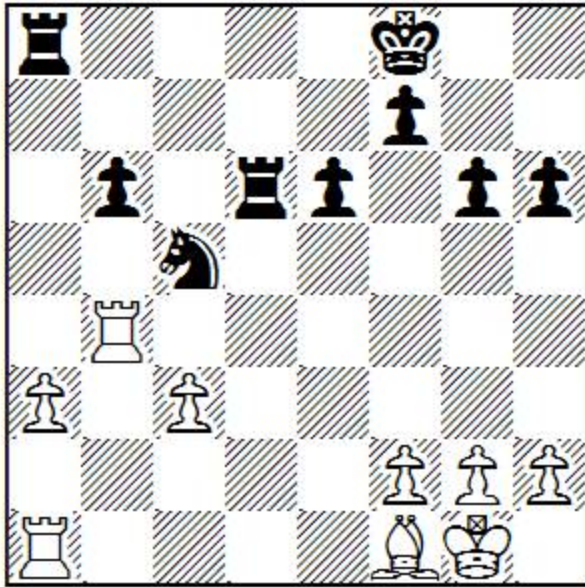
25 Qxc5

Alas, this is forced: 25 Qe2 Nc7 is bad for White, as is 25 Bxa6 Qxe3 26 fxe3 Rxa6 – because of the appearance of a third weakness (the e3-pawn) White has a very difficult rook endgame.

25 ... Nxc5 26 Rfb1 Rfd8 27 Bf1?!

Why so far? 27 a4 came into consideration, or else 27 Bc6 Rac8 28 Bf3 (28 Rxb6? Rd6 29 Bb7 Rxb6 30 Bxc8 Rc6 and wins) 28 ... Rd6, and now not 29 a4 Nd7 30 Rb3 Rc5 'followed by the switching of the black king to the centre and to the queenside' (Korchnoi), but 29 Rb4!? Nd3 30 Rd4 Rxd4 31 cxd4 with chances of a draw, although after 31 ... Kf8 (Dvoretsky) White's problems are not yet at an end.

27 ... Rd6 28 Rb4 Kf8



29 a4

Short of time, it was not easy to decide to give up a pawn by 29 Rab1 Rxa3 30 Rxb6 Rxb6 31 Rxb6 Rxc3. But in principle, as has already been mentioned, the exchange of the queenside pawns and the transition into ending with three pawns against four on the kingside is an important drawing resource for White.

29 ... Ra5

Eliminating the threat of a4-a5 and fixing the weakness at a4. 29 ... Ke7 also came into consideration, with the idea of 30 Bb5 Rad8, while 'in the event of 30 Rab1 Rxa4 (30 ... Nxa4? 31 Ra1) 31 Rxb6 Rxb6 32 Rxb6 Ne4 White would have faced a lengthy and unpleasant defence.' (Dvoretsky)

30 g3?!

Another hasty move in time-trouble. 30 Bb5 was better, and after 30 ... Nxa4?! 31 Bxa4 b5 32 Rxb5 Rxa4 33 Rbb1 Rc4 34 Ra3 Rd3 35 Rc1 or 30 ... Ke7 31 Kf1 White could have hoped for a draw.

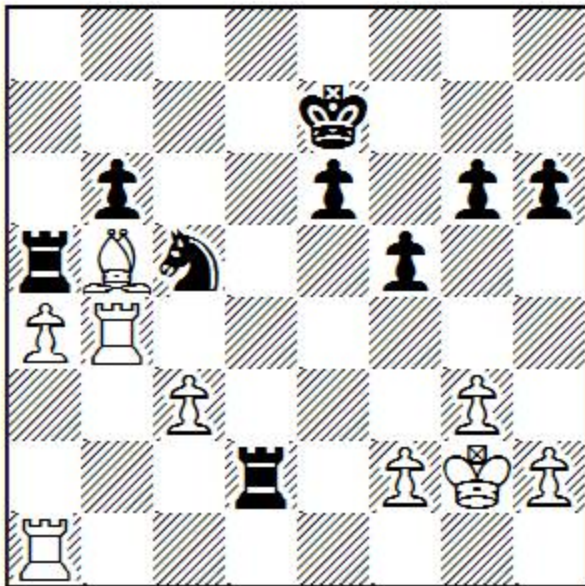
30 ... Ke7 31 Kg2 f5! (securing the e4-square for the knight) 32 Bb5

'It was bad to play 32 f3 Rd2+ 33 Kg1 Nd7 34 Bb5 Ne5, when the black pieces become very active, but the cool-headed 32 Ra2!? Ne4 33 Rc4 (according to Dvoretsky, 33 Rc2 is slightly more accurate – G.K.) would have forced Black to look for more subtle ways to

strengthen his position.' (Korchnoi). Thus 33 ... b5?! is over-hasty on account of 34 Rxe4! fxe4 35 Bxb5 (Dvoretsky), but 33 ... e5 would retain a stable advantage.

32 ... Rd2?!

An over-hasty move ... which produces a wonderful effect! Activity should have been begun only after 32 ... Kd8 and ... Kc7. In addition, Black had a good plan involving the advance of his kingside pawns: 32 ... g5 etc.



33 Rd4?

In serious time-trouble White overlooks the loss of a pawn. It was also bad to play 33 Bc6? Nd3 34 Rxb6 Nxf2! (34 ... Rxf2+ 35 Kg1 Rc2 36 Rb5 etc.) 35 Rb5 (35 Kg1 Nh3+ 36 Kh1 Re5!) 35 ... Ra6 36 Rb7+ Kf6 37 Bb5 Ng4+ 38 Kg1 Rad6! or 36 Bb7 Rad6 37 a5 R6d3! 38 a6 (38 Rb4 Rxc3 or 38 Kg1 Nh3+ 39 Kh1 Rxc3 40 Bg2 Rcc2 does not help) 38 ... Nd1+ 39 Kf1 Re3!, when the knight and two rooks imprison the white king.

Only 33 Rab1! (exploiting the drawback to Black's previous move – the weakening of the b6-pawn) gave any real chances of saving the game: 33 ... Ne4 34 R1b2 Rxb2 35 Rxb2 Nxc3 (35 ... Kd6 36 Bd3 with equality) 36 Bc6 Nxa4 (36 ... Kd6 37 Rxb6 Kc7(5) 38 Rb3 or 36 ... Ra6 37 Rb3 Nd5 38 Bb7 Rxa4 39 Bxd5 exd5 40 Rxb6 is no better) 37 Bxa4

Rxa4 38 Rxb6 (Dvoretsky), and the most probable outcome of the 'four against three' rook ending is a draw.

33 ... Rxd4 34 cxd4 Nxa4!

A simple tactical stroke, which takes play into an easily won rook endgame.

35 Rxa4 (35 Bxa4 b5 or 35 Bc6 Nc3 36 Re1 Ra2 was even worse) **35 ... Rxb5 36 Ra7+ Kd6!**

The excessively cautious 36 ... Kf6?! would have left White with some chances: 37 h4! Rd5 38 Rb7 b5 39 Kf3.

37 Rh7?!

Korchnoi gives two other continuations, which 'would have demanded great resourcefulness of Black to achieve a win':

1) 37 Kf3 Rb3+ 38 Ke2 b5 39 h4 h5 40 Rg7 Kd5 41 Rxg6 b4 42 Rh6 Rb2+ 43 Ke3 b3 44 Rh8 (44 Rxh5 Re2+!) 44 ... Rc2! 45 Rb8 Kc4, and the b-pawn with the support of the king decides the outcome: 46 Rc8+ Kb4 47 Rb8+ Kc3 48 Rc8+ Kb2 49 Rb8 Rc4 50 Kf4 Rxd4+ 51 Kg5 Kc3 52 Kxh5 b2 53 Rxb2 Kxb2 54 Kg5 Rg4+ 55 Kf6 f4 56 Kxe6 Rxg3!;

2) 37 h4 h5 38 Kf3 (38 Rg7?! Rd5 39 Rxg6 b5 40 Kf3 Rxd4 41 Rh6 b4 etc.) 38 ... e5! 39 Rg7 (after 39 dxe5+ Rxe5 the white king is cut off and the b-pawn queens) 39 ... exd4 40 Rxg6+ Kd5! 41 Rg5 Kc4 42 Rxh5 Rc5! (42 ... d3 43 Rh6! is far more complicated) 43 Rh8 b5 44 h5 b4 45 h6 b3 46 Rb8 Rc7 or 46 h7 Rc7 and wins.

37 ... h5 38 Rg7?! (according to Korchnoi, 38 Kf3 was again more tenacious, as in the variation given above) **38 ... Rd5 39 Rxg6 b5 40 Kf3 b4**

'It is a question of style: 40 ... Rxd4 would also have won without difficulty.' (Korchnoi)

41 Ke3 (41 Rg8 Rb5) **41 ... b3 42 Kd2** (42 Kd3? Rb5) **42 ... Rxd4+ 43 Kc3 b2! 44 Kxb2 Rd2+ 45 Kc3 Rxf2 46 h4**

Here the curtain could have been lowered, but through inertia I continued to resist. After 46 h3 the simplest is 46 ... h4 47 g4 (47 gxh4 Rf3+ and ... Rxh3) 47 ... Ke5 48 Rg5 (48 gxf5 Rxf5 and wins) 48 ... Rf3+ 49 Kd2 Kf4 50 Rh5 fxg4 (Korchnoi) or 50 Rg8 Rxh3 51 gxf5 Kxf5, avoiding the problematic rook ending with f- and h-pawns.

46 ... f4! 47 Rg5 (47 Rh6 fxg3 48 Rxh5 Rf5! or 47 g4 hxg4 48 Rxg4 e5 is also hopeless for White) **47 ... Rf3+ 48 Kd4 Rxg3 49 Rxh5 Re3! 50 Rh6 Ke7 51 h5 e5+ 52 Kd5 f3 0-1**

A painful defeat! However, four successive draws brought me back to normal, and the turning point came in the 6th game. It was adjourned

in an unclear, but probably drawn position. On the resumption, attempting to sharpen the play, Korchnoi chose a continuation that was not the best, and on the 57th move a prosaic rook endgame arose, where White had to display a certain accuracy to gain a draw. Korchnoi needed to find an advantageous way of giving up his rook for a passed pawn, but he transposed moves, missing an intermediate check, and his position became hopeless.

In the end I won 7-4 (+4-1=6). In an interview after the match Korchnoi admitted: 'After the 6th game I lost faith in my technique and my seconds. The scores became equal, but psychologically the match was most. My pre-match impression of Kasparov, as a player of a single knock-out blow, was faulty. Kasparov is a highly technical player for his age. He goes in for a risk only when he is confident that such a step is justified.'

Certain western commentators suggested that I should express my gratitude to Korchnoi, for the fact that he accelerated by chess maturity and helped me to grasp the subtleties of positional play. Indeed, the benefit from this match is hard to overestimate.

Thus at the end of 1983 the 'perpetual' challenger essentially said farewell to his dream of becoming world champion. In the Candidates tournament of the next cycle (Montpellier 1985) he finished well behind the leaders, although he continued to win or share first places in other tournaments: in 1984 there was Wijk aan Zee, Beersheva, Sarajevo and a win against Polugayevsky on board three in the second USSR-Rest of the World match, in 1985 – Tilburg, Lucerne (board one in the World Team Championship) and Brussels ...

Against the King's Indian

Even in the later period of his career, playing up to 150 games in a year, Korchnoi has continued to readjust and harmonise his style. As he himself writes: 'My games with Panno (1985), Arnason (1987) and Pinter (1988) are an object of pride for me, a demonstration of victory of character over harmful habits.' Indeed, Korchnoi began fighting more keenly for the initiative with White, which in combination with his fine technique gave him excellent results.

Very typical is the introduction to his game with Seirawan (Lugano 1986): 'In his time Mikhail Botvinnik advised masters and grandmasters to plan their opening repertoire, such that they would not have to battle against their own opening systems. Botvinnik, it is true,

played not more than 50 games in a year, and it was comparatively easy for him to follow his own advice. At the end of the 20th century, chess life has become more intensive. The number of top-class grandmasters has grown – not like in Botvinnik’s time, when there were just a few. There are now players who, after making a thorough study of some opening, happily play it for both sides ... For a long time I tried to follow Botvinnik’s advice. But on one occasion I grew bold. It happened like this. During a tournament I began preparing for a game with Boris Spassky where I would be Black. I carefully studied how he played the Closed Variation of the Sicilian. His handling of this position impressed me. In my attempts to refute his strategy I was unsuccessful – I drew that game with difficulty. But with the knowledge gained, I myself decided to try playing like Spassky. Since I rarely play 1 e4, I decided to employ his ideas against 1 c4 devotees. It is true that Black is a tempo down, but this did not concern me. I defeated in succession Seirawan, Suba and Karlsson. “And now,” I decided, “having gained this experience playing Black, why not play this position as White!?”

There followed 1 c4 e5 2 g3 Nc6 3 Bg2 g6 4 Nc3 Bg7 5 d3 d6 6 Rb1 f5 7 b4 Nf6 8 b5 Ne7 9 Qb3!? h6 10 e3 0-0 11 Nge2 Kh7 12 a4 Rb8 13 Ba3 Bc6 14 0-0 g5 15 d4!, and White, after seizing the initiative, ultimately gained a spectacular win. Thus over a period of four months Korchnoi defeated Seirawan in this set-up both with Black (Montpellier Candidates 1985) and with White (Lugano 1986).

In the preceding chapters you have been able to acquaint yourself with Korchnoi’s opening repertoire as Black. It is curious that, among his variety of replies to 1 d4, he has hardly ever played the King’s Indian Defence – seemingly an ideal weapon for a player of counterattacking style. Evidently, as a fervent ‘Grünfeld’ player, he did not like shutting in his bishop at g7. On the contrary, all his life he has happily played against the King’s Indian as White, employing virtually all the variations: with the development of the bishop at g2, and the Sämisch, and the classical with Nf3 and Be2.

Korchnoi’s plans have always been deeply thought out. He has made an especially great contribution to the reassessment of the Taimanov variation with 10 Be3, which was buried in 1953 and revived in 1987. From generation to generation a stereotype was passed on, even captivating Fischer: ‘Black’s kingside attack has practically been worked out to a forced mate!’ However, thanks to Korchnoi, everyone began looking differently at the potential of these positions. It turned out

that White is not so defenceless on the kingside and that he has interesting offensive possibilities on the queenside.

The first game on this theme, played in the Interzonal tournament (Zagreb 1987), resounded like thunder from a clear sky. It clearly expresses Korchnoi's eternal striving to search for unexpected, original paths. Not without reason was it judged to be the most important theoretical game of *Informator* Volume 44.

Game 39

V.Korchnoi-K.Hulak

Interzonal Tournament, Zagreb 1987, 10th round

King's Indian Defence E99

1 Nf3 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 0-0 5 Be2 d6 6 d4 e5 7 0-0 Nc6 (7 ... Nbd7 – Game No.47) 8 d5 Ne7 9 Ne1

Earlier Korchnoi successfully played both 9 Nd2 (against Geller, 1st match game, Moscow 1971), and 9 Bd2 (against Byrne, Leningrad Interzonal 1973). And once he tried the eccentric 9 a4, aiming for a favourable version of his favourite plan with Be3, but after 9 ... a5! 10 Ne1 Nd7 11 Be3 f5 12 f3 Nc5 13 Nd3 b6 14 b4 Nxd3 15 Qxd3 axb4 16 Nb5 Kh8 Black, by refraining from ... f5-f4, obtained a good position (Korchnoi-Kasparov, Barcelona 1989).

9 ... Nd7

Hindering the typical c4-c5 breakthrough. The alternative is 9 ... Ne8 (*Game Nos.40 and 41*), but not 9 ... c5?! 10 f4! (Korchnoi-Ciocaltea, Nice Olympiad 1974).

10 Be3

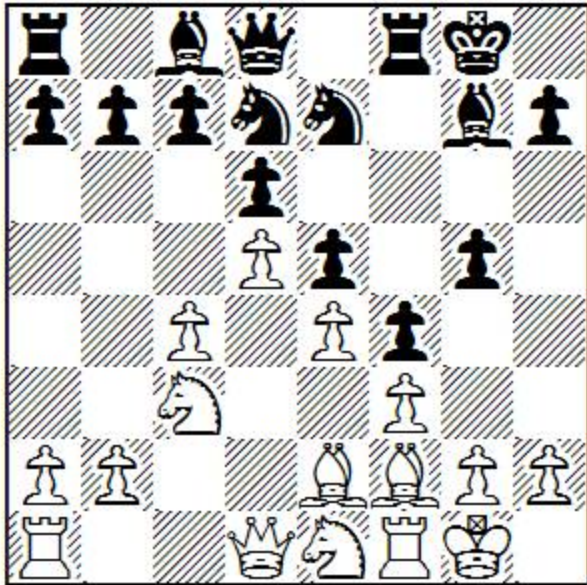
For a long time this move was considered less appropriate than 10 Nd3 (*Volume 4, Game No.64*). 'The regrouping planned by White looks rather slow, but what can be done! – I chose this variation for myself many years ago and I have devoted hundreds of hours of home analysis to it.' (Korchnoi)

10 ... f5 11 f3 f4

They more rarely play 11 ... Rf7 (Korchnoi-Spasov, Maribor 1995) or 11 ... h6 12 Nd3 b6 13 b4 g5 14 Rc1 (14 c5 Nf6 15 cxd6 cxd6 16 b5 Ng6 17 Nb4 Nf4 is unclear, Korchnoi-Yurtaev, Manila Olympiad 1992) 14 ... Nf6 15 Nf2 f4 16 Bd2 h5 17 Kh1!? (the prelude to a clever plan) 17 ... Ng6 18 c5 Rf7 19 cxd6 cxd6 20 Rg1! Bh6 21 g3! ... 1-0 (Korchnoi-Spraggett, Manila Olympiad 1992).

12 Bf2 g5

The main *tabiya* of the 10 Be3 variation, stemming from the historic 1953 games Eliskases-Gligoric and Taimanov-Najdorf (*Volume 4, Game No.29*).



Mutual flank storms are in prospect, with Black's attack looking the more dangerous: he has the white king in his sights! And the aforementioned games ended in disaster for White. But Korchnoi has his own conception, reflecting his inherent optimism: 'Black is advancing his pawns away from his king, leaving it completely without protection. If the opponent does not flinch, if the attack will be repulsed, the checkmating of the bare black king will begin. That is what in fact happened in many games that I have played with this variation.'

13 Nb5!?

An uncommonly paradoxical move in a position which had seemingly been exhaustively studied. However, it involves a sound strategic idea: by Na7xc8 to eliminate the opponent's powerful bishop and sharply reduce the effect of the ... g5-g4 breakthrough.

Soon an acceptable defence was found for Black, and then Viktor Lvovich introduced 13 a4!? (regarding the previous moves 13 Nd3 and 13 b4 – cf. *Volume 4, Game No.29*), for example:

1) 13 ... h5 14 Nb5 Nf6?! 15 Nxa7 Bd7 16 Nb5 g4 (Korchnoi-Hellers, Stockholm 1987), and here Korchnoi recommended 17 g3!? and Ng2, or 14 a5!, as played by him against Forster (Switzerland 1994) and Xie Jun (Prague 1995);

2) 13 ... Ng6 14 a5! (after 14 Nd3 Nf6 15 c5 h5 16 h3 Rf7 17 c6 White's offensive is halted by 17 ... a5! Korchnoi-Kasparov, Amsterdam

1991) 14 ... Rf7 (14 ... a6 15 Nd3 Nf6 16 c5 h5 17 cxd6 cxd6 18 Na4 ... 1-0 Korchnoi-Gelfand, Tilburg 1992; 14 ... Kh8 15 Nd3 Rg8?! 16 c5 Bf8 17 c6! bxc6 18 Nb4! Ne7 19 Nxc6 Nxc6 20 dxc6 with an obvious advantage, Korchnoi-Shirov, Horgen 1994) 15 b4 Nf6 16 c5, as Korchnoi defeated Nunn (Amsterdam 1990) and J.Polgar (Pamplona 1990), or even 15 c5!? Nxc5 16 Bxc5 dxc5 17 Bc4 Kh8 18 a6 ... 1-0 (Korchnoi-P.Popovic, Brno 1992);

3) 13 ... a5!? 14 Nd3 b6 15 b4 axb4 (15 ... h5?! is worse: 16 bxa5 Rxa5 17 Nb5 Nf6 18 Be1 Ra6 19 a5 ... 1-0 Korchnoi-Wan der Wiel, Brussels blitz 1987) 16 Nxb4 Nf6 17 Ra3 Bd7 with chances for both sides (Yusupov-Kasparov, Erevan Olympiad 1996).

But since 1996, considering the attacking resources of 13 a4 to be exhausted, Korchnoi switched to the no less complicated 13 Rc1, with the idea of 13 ... Ng6 14 c5! Nxc5 15 b4 Na6 16 Nd3 (16 Nb5 Bd7 17 Nxa7 is unclear, Korchnoi-M.Ivanov, Enghien les Bains 1997) 16 ... h5 17 Nb5 Bd7 18 a4 Bh6 19 Rc3, as in the games Piket-Kasparov (Linares 1997) and Korchnoi-Cvitan, Pula 1997).

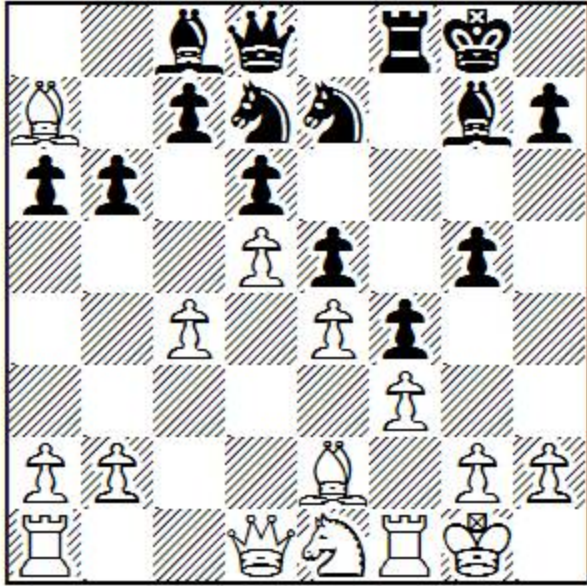
13 ... a6?!

Subsequently, players with Black employed both the gambit idea 13 ... Nf6!? 14 Nxa7 Bd7 (Benjamin-Nunn, Hastings 1987/88), and also the sound 13 ... b6! 14 b4 (14 a4 a6 15 Nc3 a5!) 14 ... a6 15 Nc3 (15 Na3?! h5 Khuzman-Smirin, Sverdlovsk 1987) 15 ... Ng6, 15 ... Nf6 16 c5 Rb8, or 15 ... h5 (Korchnoi-Ye Jiangchuan, Novi Sad Olympiad 1990), and in general they were able to neutralise 13 Nb5.

14 Na7! (of course!) 14 ... Rxa7?!

On encountering an incredible innovatory idea of his opponent, Hulak tries to refute it – by trapping the bishop. But everything has been anticipated by White! Evidently 14 ... Nf6 (Korchnoi) 15 Nxc8 Rxc8 16 c5 g4 was better, although it is hard for Black to count on any real attack without the c8-bishop.

15 Bxa7 b6



16 b4!

The only way! 16 c5 dxc5! 17 Qa4 Bb7!? 18 Bxa6 Bxa6 19 Qxa6 Qa8 20 a4 (20 Qb5 Rd8) 20 ... Nc8 (20 ... Nb8? 21 Qc4) 21 a5 (Korchnoi) was inaccurate on account of 21 ... Nb8! 22 Qc4 Nd6 and ... Qxa7.

Now, however, it turns out that the bishop at a7, although cut off, is still alive. And White, exploiting this factor, succeeds in breaking up the opponent's queenside. My trainers and I looked at this position back in 1988, when I was regularly playing the King's Indian Defence, and we came to the conclusion that Black shouldn't play this.

16 ... Bb7

With the threat of ... Qa8 or ... Nc8. 16 ... c5? does not work on account of 17 dxc6 Nxc6 18 Qd5+, while after 16 ... Nf6 17 c5 g4 18 Rc1 or 16 ... Ng6 17 Nd3 Nf6 18 c5 White gets his attack in first.

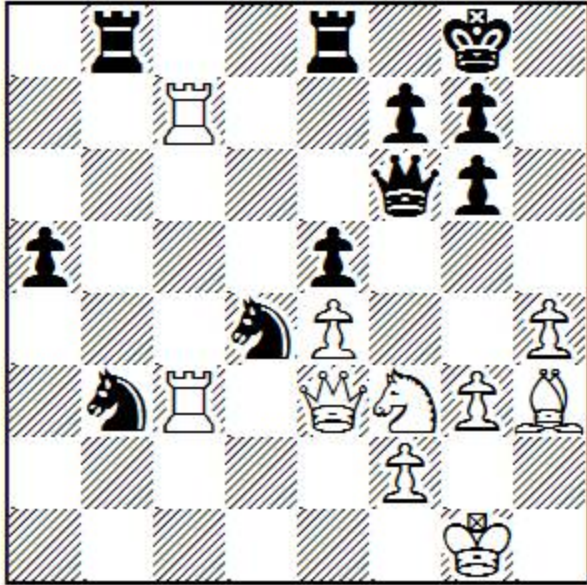
17 c5!

The strongest move. 17 Qa4 Nc8 18 c5 dxc5 19 Bxa6 Bxa6 20 Qxa6 has also been played, but after 17 ... c5! White's advantage evaporates.

17 ... dxc5

An important psychological nuance: the play begins to develop on the queenside and Black is obliged to forget about his attack on the king. It was bad to play 17 ... bxc5? 18 bxc5 (18 Qa4!?) 18 ... Qa8 (18

... dxc5 19 Rc1, or 19 Rb1 Qa8 20 d6!) 19 Bb6! cxb6 20 c6 and wins (Korchnoi).



18 Rc1! (of course, not 18 bxc5? Nxc5 19 Rc1 Qd6 with the threat of ... Ra8) 18 ... Nc8

If 18 ... cxb4 the strongest is 19 d6!, for example: 19 ... Nc6 20 Bxa6 Bxa6 21 Rxc6 (Korchnoi) 21 ... cxd6 22 Rxd6 Rf7 23 Bxb6!, or 19 ... cxd6 20 Qxd6 Rf6 21 Qc7 Qc8 22 Nd3 Rc6 (22 ... a5 23 Nf2) 23 Rxc6 Nxc6 24 Qxc8+ (24 Bxb6!?) 24 ... Bxc8 25 Rc1 Nxa7 (25 ... Bb7 26 Nxb4!) 26 Rc7 with a decisive invasion (Karolyi-Kupreichik, Lvov 1988).

19 bxc5 Ba8 (after 19 ... Nxc5 20 Rxc5! bxc5 21 Bxc5 Nd6 22 Qb3(a4) and Nd3 White has an obvious positional advantage) 20 c6

Completely shutting the c8-bishop out of the game. White could also have considered 20 Bxb6!? cxb6 21 c6 Nc5 22 Nd3 Nxd3 23 Qxd3 b5 24 Qa3 Qb6+ 25 Qc5, denying Black any counterplay and condemning him to a difficult defence.

20 ... Nf6 21 Bxb6 Nxb6 22 Bxa6 g4?!

A routine attacking attempt, which merely leads to a new weakening. Much better chances were offered by 22 ... Qb8! (22 ... Qd6 23 Nd3 and Nc5) 23 Kh1 Qa7 24 Qe2 (Korchnoi) 24 ... Nh5!? True, with the energetic 25 d6! White could have continued playing for a win: 25 ... Rf6?! 26 d7 Nxd7 27 g4! Ng3+ 28 hxg3 Bxc6 29 gxf4 exf4

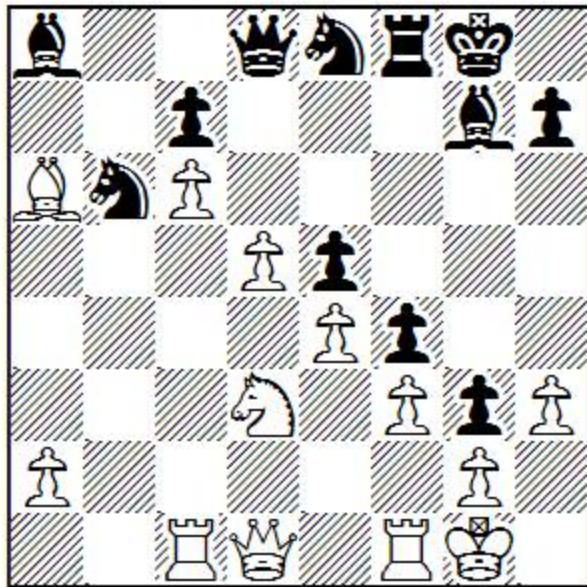
30 Bb5, or 25 ... cxd6 26 c7 Bb7 (26 ... Nc8 27 Qd3 Qb6 28 Qb3+ Qxb3 29 axb3 Nf6 30 Nd3) 27 Bxb7 Qxb7 28 Qd3 Nc8 29 Qc4+ Kh8 30 Nd3 etc.

23 Nd3 (the knight heads along the route c5-e6) 23 ... g3?!

23 ... h5 or 23 ... Qb8 (Korchnoi) was more tenacious, although this would hardly have affected the outcome of the game.

24 h3 (killing any counterplay) 24 ... Ne8

The immediate 24 ... Qb8 would have allowed 25 d6. Black establishes a blockade at d6, but now the a-pawn begins advancing.



25 Nc5 Qb8 26 a4 Nd6 27 a5 Nbc8 28 Kh1 Qa7 29 Qc2 Ne7 30 Rb1 Ng6 (or 30 ... Rb8 31 Rxb8+ Qxb8 32 Bb7) 31 Rfc1 Bf6 32 Bf1 Bxc6

Forced: White's pressure on the queenside was already quite unbearable. 32 ... Qxa5 was not possible in view of 33 Ra1 Qb4 34 Rcb1 Qd4 35 Ne6.

33 dxc6 Qxa5 34 Ra1 Qb4 35 Ne6 1-0

It is staggering that even at the age of 56 he was able to win the Interzonal tournament: 1. Korchnoi – 11 out of 16; 2-3. Ehlvest and Seirawan – 10, ahead of Nikolic, Torre, Polugayevsky, Miles ... And early in the same year 1987 Korchnoi shared 1st place with Short in Wijk aan Zee, establishing a record for the number of victories (four!) in this prestigious traditional tournament.

His subsequent attempts to 'refute' the King's Indian Defence were also very successful: after the game with Hulak he gained a number of striking wins in the variation with 13 a4!? Here his only failure over a period of eight years was his game with me in Amsterdam (1991). A year later we again clashed in a King's Indian at the European Team Championship in Debrecen, and I only escaped by the skin of my teeth. And soon Korchnoi tried to improve White's play in a game with Shirov.

Game 40

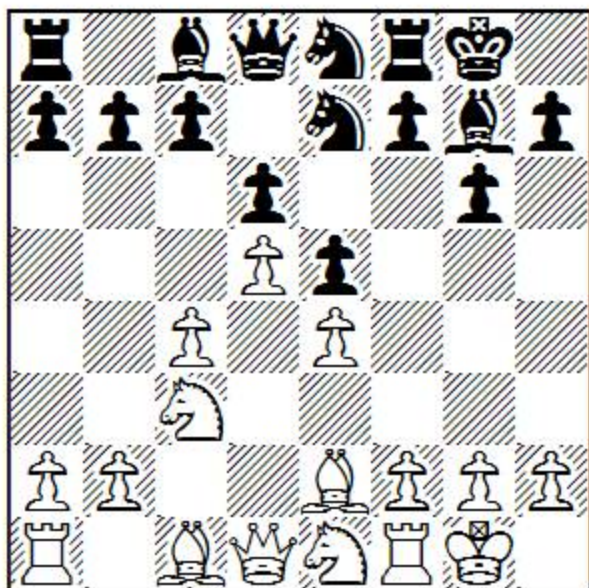
V.Korchnoi-A.Shirov

Buenos Aires 1993, 5th round

King's Indian Defence E98

1 c4 Nf6 2 Nc3 g6 3 e4 d6 4 d4 Bg7 5 Be2 0-0 6 Nf3 e5 7 0-0 Nc6 8 d5 Ne7 9 Ne1 Ne8

This move, employed by me in games with Shirov (Manila Olympiad 1992) and Korchnoi (Debrecen 1992), used to be considered weaker than 9 ... Nd7 (*Game No.39*). This may be so, but 9 ... Ne8 also has the right to exist. The knight defends the c7-square against the invasion of the white pieces, which reduces the effectiveness of the standard plan with 10 Nd3 and c4-c5. However, White has other possibilities.



10 Be3

Of course, Korchnoi is not satisfied with the comparatively safe – but also inoffensive! – continuation 10 Nd3 f5 11 f4 (Petrosian-Tal, Bled 1961).

10 ... f5 11 f3 f4

11 ... c5 (*Game No.41*) is another idea. I should also mention 11 ... Kh8 12 a4 (12 c5!?) 12 ... Ng8 13 c5 Bh6 14 Bf2 Ngf6 15 a5 Nh5 16 g3 (Korchnoi-J.Polgar, Prague 1995) or 16 Nd3! (Gelfand-J.Polgar, Dos Hermanas 1996) with a complicated game, somewhat better for White.

12 Bf2 h5

Korchnoi was surprised that I should recommend this move, and not 12 ... g5, after which he played 13 c5 Ng6 14 a4 Rf7?! 15 Nd3 Bf8 16 a5 Rg7 17 a6!? (against Van Wely, Antwerp 1997). However, in my opinion, 13 g4! is more timely, nipping in the bid Black's counterattack. In a different situation it can, of course, be more advantageous to manage without ... h7-h5, retaining the h5-square for the knight.

13 c5 g5 14 a4

The aforementioned Shirov-Kasparov game went 14 cxd6 cxd6 15 a4 Ng6 (15 ... Rf6!?) 16 Nb5 a6 17 Na3 Nf6 18 Nc4 g4 19 Qb3 g3 20 hxg3 (20 Bb6 Qe7 21 Kh1! is better, but not 21 Qb4? Nxd5! 22 exd5 Qh4 23 h3 Bxh3! etc.) 20 ... fxg3 21 Bxg3 h4 22 Bh2 Nh5 (22 ... Bh6!?) 23 Qb6 Qg5 and ... Ng3! with good play for Black.

Later Viktor Lvovich switched to 14 cxd6 cxd6 (14 ... Nxd6 15 Nd3 Korchnoi-Relange, Cannes 1996) 15 Kh1!? Ng6 16 Rc1 Bd7 (16 ... Bh6 17 Nb5! a6 18 Na7 Bd7 19 Qb3 etc.) 17 a4 Bh6 with a double-edged struggle (Korchnoi-J.Polgar, Vienna 1996).

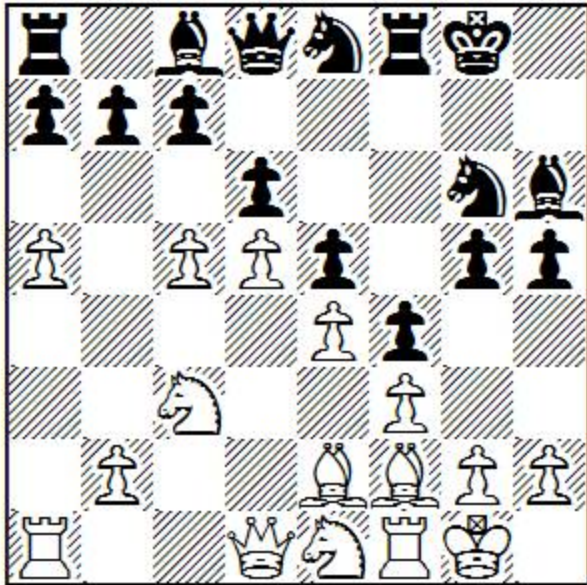
There is also another plan – 14 Rc1 dxc5 15 Bxc5 Rf6 16 Qb3 Kh7 17 Nd3 Rg6 18 Nb5! a6 19 Na7 Rxa7?! (following in the footsteps of Hulak!) 20 Bxa7 b6 21 Rc2 (21 Nb4!? Khuzman) 21 ... Bd7 22 Rfc1 Nc8 23 Bb8 Ncd6 24 Bxc7 Nxc7 25 Rxc7 Nb5 26 Rb7 and it is doubtful whether Black has sufficient compensation for the exchange and a pawn (Korchnoi-G.Hernandez, 1st matchgame, Merida 1996).

14 ... Ng6 (14 ... Rf6!? and ... Rg6, Korchnoi-J.Polgar, Monaco blindfold 1994) **15 a5 Bh6!?**

Clearing the g-file. In addition, after ... g5-g4(-g3) this 'bad' bishop may find work for itself – say, ... Bg5-h4 etc.

After the insipid 15 ... Rf7?! 16 cxd6 cxd6 the plan with 17 Nb5! is even more unpleasant: 17 ... a6 18 Nc3 Nf6 19 Na4 (O'Kelly-Ghitescu, Sandefjord 1975), because of which the entire variation with 9 ... Ne8

was rejected. 15 ... dxc5 is also insufficient: 16 Bxc5 Nd6 17 Nd3 Rf7 18 a6 b6 19 Bxd6! ... 1-0 (Korchnoi-Nemet, Switzerland 1994).



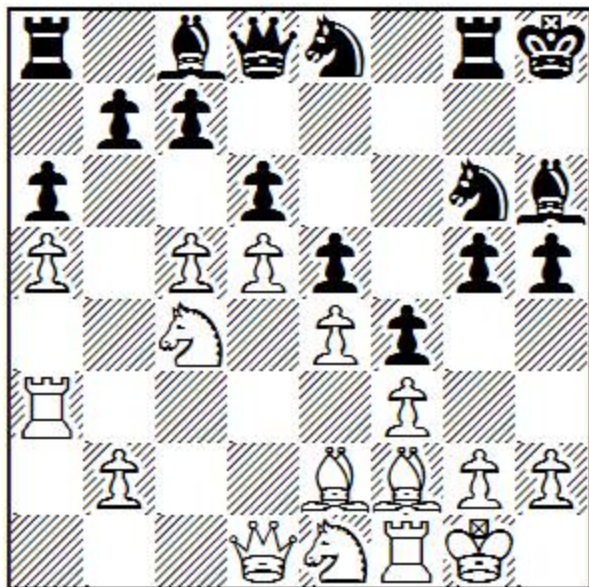
16 Nb5!?

A novelty. Against me in Debrecen, Korchnoi chose 16 b4 Kh7 17 cxd6 (17 a6!?) 17 ... cxd6 18 Nb5, and in a complicated struggle after 18 ... g4 (if 18 ... a6 19 Na3 Nf6, then 20 Rc1! is strong) 19 fxg4 hxg4 20 Bxg4 Bxg4 21 Qxg4 Nf6 22 Qf3 (22 Qf5!? Nxd5 23 Qe6) 22 ... Qd7! 23 Nxa7! Ng4 24 b5! Nxf2 (24 ... Ne3? 25 b6!) 25 Qxf2 f3! 26 Nxf3 Qg4 27 b6 Qxe4 28 Rfe1 Qxd5 29 Qc2 Rae8 Black experienced serious problems, but gained a draw on the 44th move.

16 ... a6 (forced: give up the a7-pawn?!) 17 Na3 Kh8

With the intention of ... Rg8. 17 ... Rf7 18 Nc4 Rg7 (18 ... dxc5 19 Nd3!) 19 Ra3 etc. was no better for Black.

18 Nc4 (if 18 cxd6, in the hope of 18 ... cxd6 19 Nc4, then 18 ... Nxd6! with an unclear game) 18 ... Rg8 19 Ra3



19 ... Nf6

'Up to here Shirov did not have to think very much – he was repeating the play of Kasparov, who had already employed this variation several times. Now he makes a mistake, prematurely activating his knight. Correct was either 19 ... Nf8, or 19 ... dxc5 20 Bxc5 Nd6 – this is why I subsequently began exchanging on d6 earlier!' (Korchnoi)

But, in my opinion, 19 ... Nf8 is too passive, since after 20 cxd6 cxd6 (20 ... Nxd6? 21 Nxe5) it is difficult for Black to create threats on the kingside. And if 19 ... dxc5!? there is 20 Nd3!? Nd6 21 Nxc5, when Black has to play extremely inventively in search of counter-chances: 21 ... g4 22 Nxd6 cxd6 23 Ne6 Bxe6 24 dxe6 g3 25 Bb6 gxh2+ 26 Kh1 Qe7 27 Rd3 Nh4 28 Rf2 Rac8! 29 Bf1 Bf8 30 Rc2 Rxc2 31 Qxc2 Qxe6 32 Bf2 Be7 etc.

20 cxd6 cxd6 21 Nb6?!

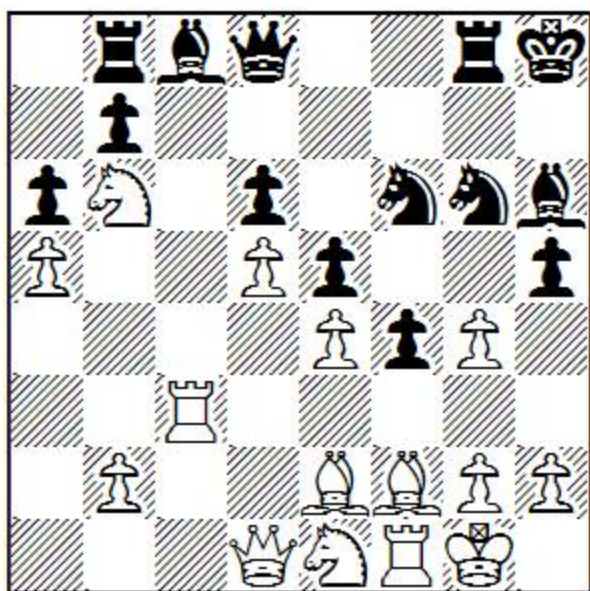
Korchnoi attaches a question mark to this move, lamenting: 'It is difficult being a pioneer.' Indeed, after 21 Qb3 g4 (21 ... Qe7 22 Qb4!) 22 Qb6, recommended by him and Shirov, White would have retained the advantage, although just how great an advantage is another question: 22 ... Qxb6 23 Nxb6 Rb8 24 Kh1 Bg5 25 Rc3 Bh4 26 Nd3 gxf3 27 gxf3 Bh3 28 Rg1 Rg7.

21 ... Rb8 22 Rc3

If 22 Qc2 g4 23 Rc3 (23 fxc4 hxc4 Shirov), then 23 ... g3! 24 hxc3 fxc3 25 Bxc3 h4 26 Bh(f)2 Nh5 with excellent play for the pawn. Perhaps the dangerous bishop should have been exchanged immediately – 22 Nxc8, although after 22 ... Rxc8 23 Kh1 g4 24 Bb6 Qd7 Black's chances are not worse.

22 ... g4! 23 fxc4

'Played after lengthy reflection. Black was threatening ... g4-g3, and in some cases also the capture on f3.' (Korchnoi). For example: 23 Kh1 (Shirov) 23 ... g3 24 Bg1 gxh2 25 Bf2! h4! and ... Nh5 with the invasion of the knight at g3.



23 ... Nxe4!

If 23 ... hxc4 White was intending 24 Nxc8 Rxc8 25 Bxc4 Rxc3 26 bxc3, and since 26 ... Nxg4? 27 Qxg4 Qxa5 28 Qh3! is bad for Black, 'the light-squared bishop becomes very strong': 26 ... Nxe4 27 Bb6 Qf6 28 Be6, or 26 ... Qxa5 27 Be6 Rg7 28 Qd3 Rc7 29 c4 etc.

Korchnoi also thought that 23 ... Bxc4 was not dangerous for him – in this way Black avoids the exchange of his bishop for the knight and, exploiting his superiority in force on the kingside, he could have tried to create pressure along the g-file and on the weak e4-pawn. But after 24 h3 White does indeed have quite a good position.

24 Rxc8 Rxc8 25 Nxc8 Qxc8

Shirov could have eliminated one of the opponent's powerful bishops – 25 ... Nxf2 26 Rxf2 Qxc8. Here Korchnoi considers 27 g5 Bxg5 28 Bxh5 (28 Bxa6 f3!) 28 ... Qc5 29 Bxg6 Rxg6 30 Qc2 Qxc2 31 Rxc2 Rg8 with somewhat the better endgame for Black: 'his pawn formation is highly promising'.

27 gxh5 is evidently better – in Korchnoi's opinion, after 27 ... Nh4 or 27 ... Ne7 Black's position looks too active', but in my view, after both 27 ... Nh4 28 Nf3 Nf5 29 Qb1 Ne3 30 Nh4 Rg7 31 Ng6+ Kg8 32 h3 Rc7 33 Qe4, and 27 ... Ne7 28 Bf3 or 28 Nc2 it is not easy for him to breach the blockade on the light squares and the position is unclear.

26 Bb6!

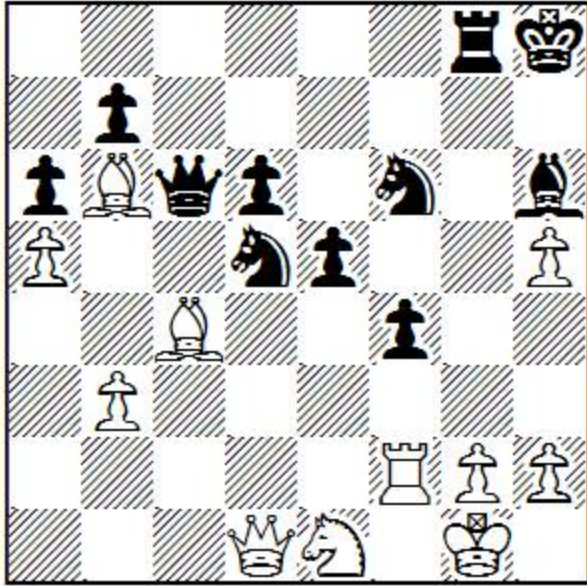
'Another difficult move. White must preserve his bishops – they will come in useful!' (Korchnoi)

26 ... Ne7! (avoiding the dangerous activation of the light-squared bishop in the event of 26 ... hxg4?! 27 Bxg4 or 26 ... h4?! 27 Bd3 Nf6(g5) 28 Bf5) 27 gxh5 Nf6 28 b3!

'This is Korchnoi's "clumsy" style at its very best.' (Larsen). It was weak to play 28 Bf3 Qf5! with the threat of ... e5-e4 (Knaak), while if 29 Qc2, then 29 ... Qxc2 (29 ... e4? 30 Bd4) 30 Nxc2 Nexd5.

28 ... Nexd5 29 Bc4 Qc6 30 Rf2

'The position is an unusual one. Black's central pawns must not be underestimated – in any ending he will have the advantage. Bent Larsen, who very much liked this game, assessed this position as won for White. Apparently he simply mistook the desirable for the actual ... ' (Korchnoi)

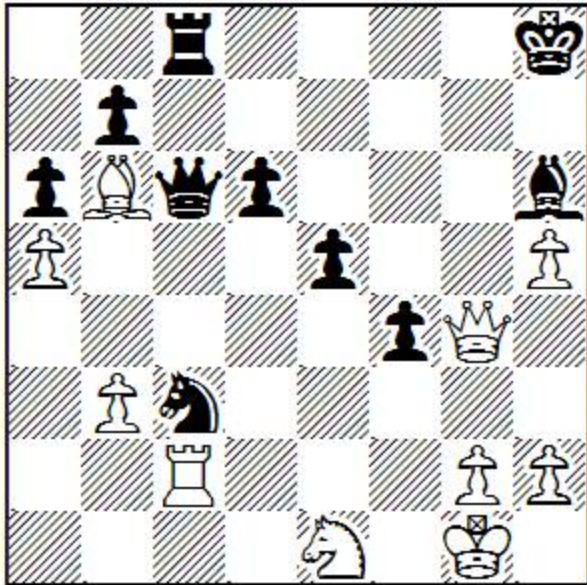


30 ... Rc8?

A fundamental mistake in a very complicated position. The cool-headed 30 ... Rf8! (Shirov) would have enabled Black, at the minimum, to maintain the balance: 31 Bxd5 Nxd5 32 Rc2 (it is bad to play 32 Qg4?! Nxb6 33 axb6 d5, or, as shown by Korchnoi, 32 Rd2?! Ne3 33 Bxe3 fxe3 34 Rxd6 e2 35 Rxh6+ Qxh6 36 Qxe2 Qf4) 32 ... Qb5 33 Nf3 (not 33 Qg4? Ne3 or 33 Qd3?! Qxd3 34 Nxd3 e4) 33 ... Qxb3 (33 ... Re8!? 34 Nh4!) 34 Rd2 Qxd1+ 35 Rxd1 Nxb6 36 Rxd6 Bg7 37 axb6 (37 Rxb6? e4) with a drawn ending.

Korchnoi continues 37 ... a5 38 Rd7 Rb8 39 h6 Bxh6 40 Nxe5 with equality, or 37 ... e4 38 Ng5 e3 39 Kf1 Rc8, and here 'the simplest way to draw is 40 Rd8+ Rxd8 41 Nf7+.' But after 41 ... Kh7! 42 Nxd8 Bd4 and ... Bxb6 it is not clear whether White can manage to neutralise Black's two passed pawns – 'a' and 'e'. In my opinion, it is simpler to play 40 g3 f3 41 Nxf3 Rc2 42 Kg1, or 40 Rd7 Rc1+ 41 Ke2 Rc2+ 42 Kf3 Rf2+ 43 Ke4 Bf6 44 Nf7+ Kg8 45 Nh6+ Kh8 46 Nf7+ with perpetual check.

31 Bxd5 Nxd5 (31 ... Qxd5 32 Rd2 was no better) 32 Rc2 Nc3 33 Qg4!



Material is equal, but White unexpectedly launches an attack, and Black loses because of the fatal pin on his knight.

33 ... Bf8

If 33 ... Qe8 White would have won by 34 Qh3 Qc6 35 Qe6 or 35 Nf3 and Nh4. Korchnoi considered the best defence to be 33 ... Rg8 34 Qe6 Bf8 (34 ... Bg7? 35 h6), although after 35 h6! Qe4 36 Kf1 White would also have won.

34 Nd3 Qe8 35 Nb4! (with the decisive threat of Nd5) **35 ... d5 36 Nxd5 Bc5+ 37 Bxc5 Rxc5 (37 ... Nxd5 38 Bf8!) 38 h6 Qf8 39 Rxc3 1-0**

A complicated, dynamic, typically King's Indian struggle, in which the young talent failed to withstand the onslaught of the 63-year-old veteran.

That same year, taking part in the Dutch Team Championship, Korchnoi also improved White's play in another branch of this sharp variation of the King's Indian. In his game with Nijboer he was able to carry out the same destructive piece sacrifice with the aim of creating a pawn avalanche, as once made previously by Tal (*Volume 2, Game No.133*) and Spassky (*Volume 3, Game No.77*).

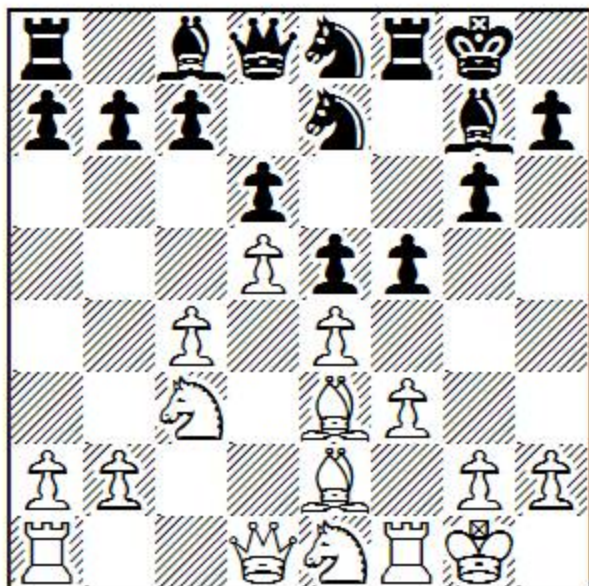
Game 41

V.Korchnoi-F.Nijboer

Netherlands 1993

King's Indian Defence E98

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 Be2 0-0 6 Nf3 e5 7 0-0 Nc6 8 d5 Ne7 9 Ne1 Ne8
(9 ... Nd7 is nevertheless more solid – *Game No.39*) 10 Be3 f5 11 f3



11 ... c5?!

Instead of the usual 11 ... f4 12 Bf2 g5 13 c5 (*Game No.40*) Black wants first to safeguard himself on the queenside, and only then begin his counterattack on the kingside. However, both practice, and my own King's Indian experience, suggest that usually this move is insufficient: Black loses time, and all the same he is unable to block the flank completely.

12 Nd3!

Not long before this, against the same opponent in Wijk aan Zee (1993), Korchnoi had chosen 12 dxc6 bxc6 13 Qd2 (13 c5?! d5) 13 ... Be6 14 Rd1 Qc7 15 f4, and after 15 ... exf4 16 Bxf4 fxe4 17 Nxe4 (17 c5? Nd5) 17 ... Qb6+ 18 Be3 Rxf1+ 19 Kxf1 Qxb2 20 Qxb2 Bxb2 21 Nxd6 Black could have gained equal chances by 21 ... Be5! But Nijboer went wrong, got into time-trouble, and in the end he lost.

The knight move is stronger: White gradually prepares the piece sacrifice on c5, exploiting the remoteness of both black knights from the defence of this point.

12 ... f4 13 Bf2 h5?!

Korchnoi is terribly critical of this move, regarding it as the reason for Black's crushing defeat in this game, and adding: 'The trouble is that this move was recommended in a similar position by the world champion Kasparov!'

However, I recommended ... h7-h5 in a different position (cf. the note to Black's 12th move in *Game No.40*). In such complicated, double-edged set-ups all the distinctions must be keenly felt. Here I would have preferred 13 ... g5 – every tempo is precious to Black, and now 14 g4 is no longer dangerous for him, since he has succeeded in 'freezing' the queenside. And for White, if he is aiming for the piece sacrifice, playing g2-g4 is inconvenient for him. There could have followed 14 b4 b6 15 a4 a5 16 bxc5 bxc5 17 Rb1 Ng6, and in the variations with 18 Nxc5, instead of the unnecessary move ... h7-h5 Black has made the far more useful ... Ng6.

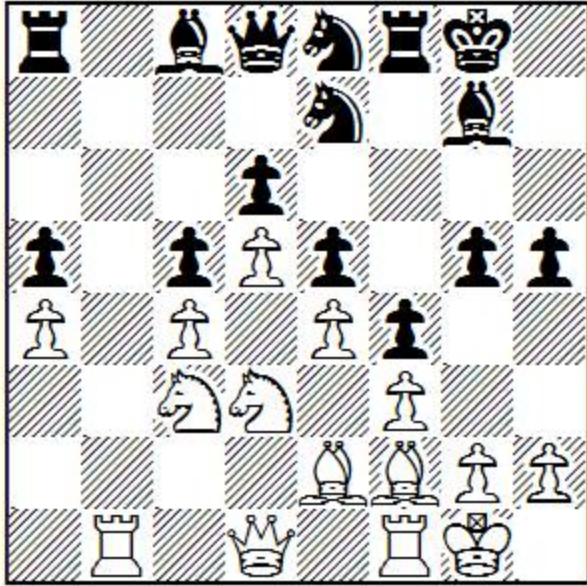
It is such nuances that comprise the difference in the understanding of this or that position. Nijboer thought that he had erected a fortress, but in fact this proves to be an illusion.

14 b4 (it is essential to open the b-file) **14 ... b6 15 a4 a5 16 bxc5 bxc5**

'After 16 ... dxc5 Black is left with two pawn weaknesses – at b6 and e5, but on the other hand he obtains a good square for his knight – d6. It is true that dxc5 might not have affected the course of the present game.' (Korchnoi)

17 Rb1 g5

Launching a counter-offensive, in a seemingly solid position. But Korchnoi points out that, out of his first 17 moves, Black has made 11 with his pawns and he has advanced all eight of them! Whereas his pieces are all huddled together on the 7th and 8th ranks ...



18 Nxc5!

‘This came as a surprise to my opponent, as, however, did many of my other moves in this game,’ Korchnoi remarks with satisfaction. ‘The unhurried 18 Qb3 was possible, also with a solid advantage to White.’ And if 18 ... Ng6, then 19 Qb6. But the knight sacrifice is far more effective!

18 ... dxc5 19 Bxc5 Ng6?!

In Korchnoi’s opinion, ‘19 ... Rf6 was correct, defending the b6-square, and intending to post the rook at g6 and the bishop at f8. After 20 Qb3 Bf8 21 Bf2 g4 22 c5 Kh7 23 d6 White has excellent compensation for the sacrificed piece, but there is still a serious battle in prospect.’

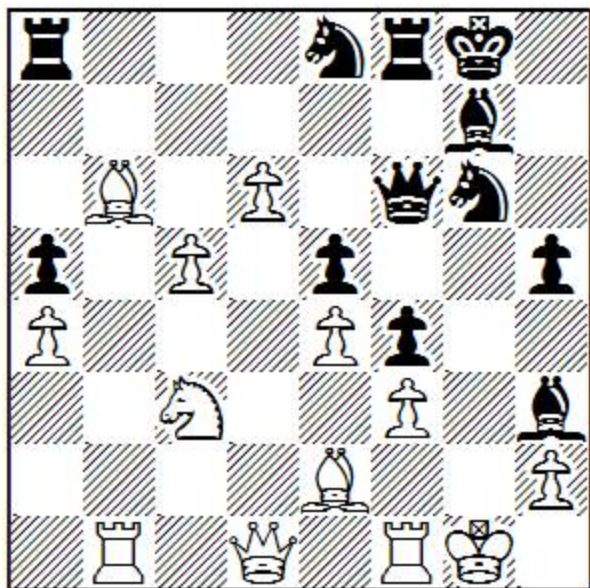
However, 21 Bb6! is stronger, forcing 21 ... Rxb6 (otherwise 22 c5!) 22 Qxb6 Qxb6+ 23 Rxb6, and after 23 ... Nf5 (23 ... Nxd5?! 24 Nxd5 and wins) 24 Rg6+ Nfg7 25 Rxc5 White has a rook and three pawns for two minor pieces and every chance of winning. What can Black do? If 20 ... Ng6 or 20 ... Nd6 there also follows 21 Bb6 and c4-c5, while if 20 ... Nc7, then 21 d6! There only remains 20 ... Raa6, but then too after 21 Bf2 g4 22 c5 things are difficult for Black. However, after the move in the game he loses even more quickly.

20 Bb6! (White does not need to win the exchange: the main thing is to advance his pawn avalanche) **20 ... Qf6 21 c5 g4 22 d6!** (avoiding being

diverted by 22 fxg4) 22 ... gxf3 (22 ... Be6 23 d7) 23 gxf3

An exchange sacrifice, demonstrating the power of the white pawns! The simple 23 Bxf3!? Rf7 24 Qd5 was also good.

23 ... Bh3



24 Kh1! Bxf1 25 Bxf1 Qe6?!

25 ... Nxd6, connecting the rooks, was slightly more tenacious. True, Black's position remains lost both after 26 Qxd6 Qxd6 27 cxd6 Bf6 28 Nd5 Bd8 29 Nc7 Rb8 30 Bb5 and Bxa5, and after 26 cxd6! – the passed pawn is too strong.

26 d7 Nf6 (26 ... Nd6 27 Qxd6 Qxd6 28 cxd6 was hopeless, as was the 'comparatively best' 26 ... Bf6 27 Qd5 Qxd5 28 Nxd5 – Korchnoi) 27 d8Q Rfxd8 28 Bxd8 Nd7 29 Bg5 Rc8

Or 29 ... Nxc5 30 Nd5 Ra7 31 Rb6 Qf7 (31 ... Qe8 32 Bb5) 32 Bc4 Kh8 33 Qg1 with decisive threats.

30 Qd5 Ngf8

After 30 ... Qxd5 31 exd5 Rxc5 32 Ne4 (Korchnoi) or 30 ... Nxc5 31 Rb6! Qxd5 32 exd5 Nf8 (32 ... Kf7 33 Bh3) 33 Rc6 Rxc6 34 dxc6 the passed pawn is irresistible.

31 Be7 Nxc5? (blundering a piece, but 31 ... Kh8 32 Bxf8 Nxf8 33 Rb5 was also bad for Black) 32 Bh3 Qxd5 33 Nxd5 1-0

If 33 ... Rc6 34 Rc1.

Nevertheless, Korchnoi considers the King's Indian Defence to be 'quite a flexible opening', only in the Classical Variation he does not approve of 7 ... Nc6: 'It is surprising that so many top players choose the least flexible move, leading to sharp play with attacks on opposite sides. A quiet, strategic battle results after 7 ... Nbd7, 7 ... Na6 or 7 ... exd4.'

Well, we will see what the consequences of the 'quiet' 7 ... Nbd7 can be (*Game No.47*). As fifty years of practice have shown, the move 7 ... Nc6 is not really so 'inflexible', and Korchnoi's categorical evaluation is a reflection more of his natural maximalism. Incidentally, Eduard Gufeld, a well-known advocate of the King's Indian Defence, stated categorically that, on the contrary, in all three of its main variations (with 3 g3, 5 f3 and 5 Nf3, Be2 and 0-0) Black should develop his queen's knight only at c6, since this is the sole way of gaining sufficient counterplay!

Strict Examiner

During his long chess career, Korchnoi, as he himself has said, has had to meet with representatives of at least six generations at the board. Moreover, against the young he has always played with some kind of special fervour, in a very interesting creative manner. And even grandmasters among the top ten in the world have very often been unable to find an effective antidote to his deep and unusual ideas.

His forte still remained new, unexpected and energetic continuations, sharply changing the situation on the board. Often his opponents were simply unable to find their bearings, although traditionally it is considered that the young brain should react more quickly to any changes. But even in his advancing years Korchnoi has not lost his freshness of perception. Sudden changes of scene do not frighten him – he himself aims for them! Even now an uneven chess tempo is his natural element! Plus, as has already been mentioned, exceptionally fine technique and positional understanding. Therefore his games with young players, keeping in mind their strength and potential, are especially important and instructive.

I will begin with the double-round tournament of eight grandmasters in Tilburg (1989), a memorable one for me. The oldest contestant was the 58-year-old Viktor Korchnoi, and the youngest – the 20-year-old Ukrainian grandmaster Vasily Ivanchuk, who was then already rated No.3 in the world. Ivanchuk's enormous talent was obvious: Botvinnik

even predicted victory for him in Tilburg, despite the participation of the world champion! Initially Vasily justified these hopes: at the start, like Korchnoi and I, he scored 3 out of 4, gaining a draw with Black against Korchnoi. In the 5th round I managed to beat Ivanchuk – but Korchnoi also won his game! Nevertheless, by gaining five successive wins, I pulled away from my rival, and in the second half of the tournament there was only a fight for 2nd place.

After his loss to me, Ivanchuk tried desperately but unsuccessfully to improve his tournament position. And his game from the second half with Korchnoi was virtually his last chance of finishing in the first three. It should be said that Vasily has always been distinguished by his serious approach to the game: he could play anything at all, but he tried to choose openings specially for his particular opponents. However, here he met his match!

Game 42

V.Ivanchuk-V.Korchnoi

Tilburg 1989

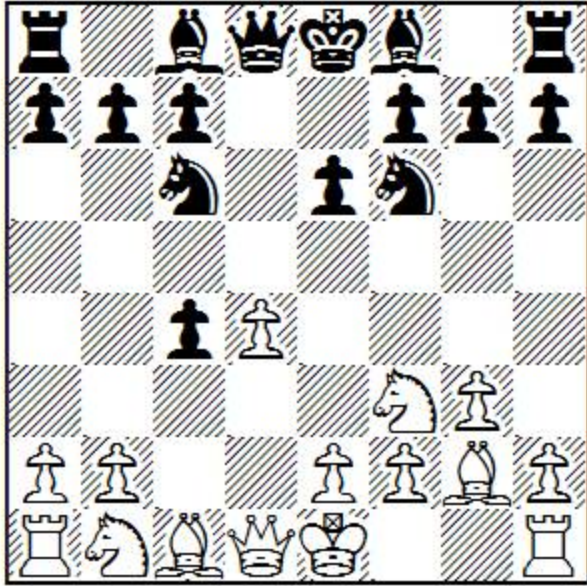
Catalan Opening E04

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e6 3 g3

Not Ivanchuk's main weapon. Possibly he chose the Catalan under the influence of the Kasparov-Korchnoi match (1983), where Black lost $\frac{1}{2}$ -2 $\frac{1}{2}$ in this opening. If Vasily was hoping that his opponent would still have an unpleasant aftertaste, this psychological ploy proved unjustified.

3 ... d5 4 Bg2 dxc4 5 Nf3 (after the quiet 5 Qa4+ Nbd7 White regains the pawn, but usually loses his opening initiative) **5 ... Nc6!?**

A rare variation at that time – although after this game it gained momentum! 5 ... a6 used to be very popular, while in his match with me Korchnoi tried 5 ... c5, and 5 ... Bd7, and 5 ... Nbd7.

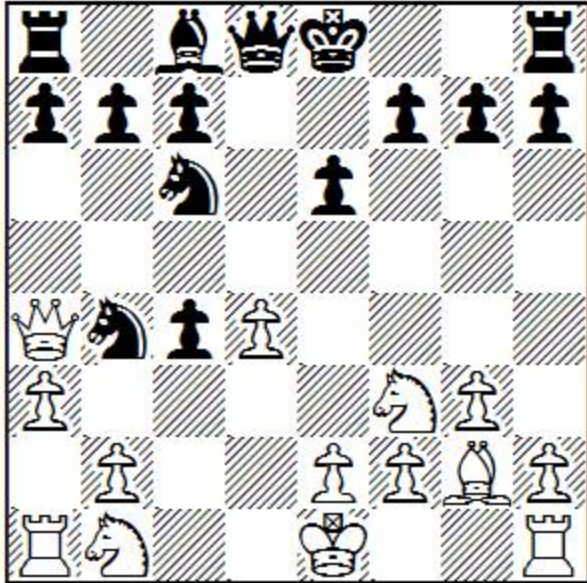


6 Qa4 (6 0-0 a6 or 6 ... Rb8 Kir.Georgiev-Korchnoi, Biel 1992) 6 ... Bb4+ 7 Bd2 Nd5 (7 ... Bd6!? 8 0-0 0-0 9 Qxc4 e5 Karpov-Kramnik, Wijk aan Zee 1998) 8 Bxb4

8 Qb5 is more rarely played, in order after 8 ... 0-0 to regain the pawn – 9 Qxc4, and after 8 ... Bxd2+ 9 Nbx d2 c3 10 bxc3 Nxc3 11 Qd3 Nd5 12 0-0 0-0 followed by e2-e4 to obtain quite good compensation for it.

8 ... Ndx b4 9 a3

'Theory considers 9 0-0 Rb8 10 Nc3 a6 11 Ne5 to be more prudent, but some players, and they include Ivanchuk, do not seek safety in chess!' (Korchnoi)



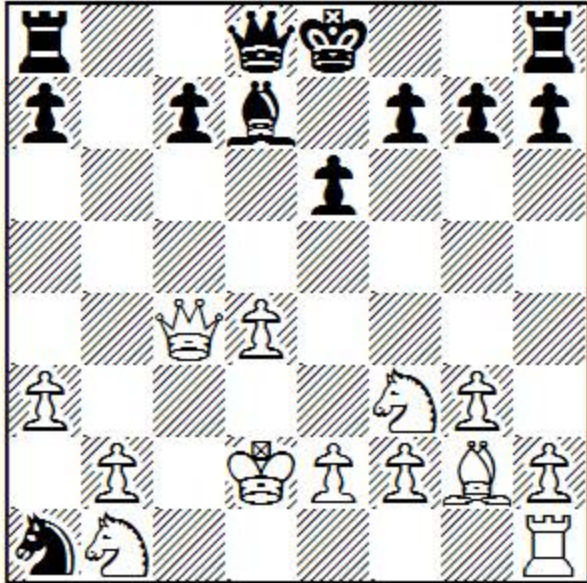
9 ... b5! 10 Qxb5

In the event of 10 Qd1 Nd5 Black has a perfectly sound position with an extra pawn: 11 e4 (11 a4 b4) 11 ... Nb6 12 Nc3 a6 13 0-0 0-0 14 Qd2 Bb7 15 Rad1 Qe7 16 h4 Rad8 (Karpov-Kramnik, Monaco blindfold 1999).

10 ... Nc2+ 11 Kd2

After the newly fashionable 11 Kf1 Bd7! 12 Ra2 N6xd4 13 Qc5 Qe7 or 13 ... Nf5!? (Karpov-Van Wely, 1st matchgame, Dubai rapidplay 2002), it is also hard for White to count on an advantage.

11 ... Nxa1 (since the mid-1990s 11 ... Bd7!? 12 Kxc2 Nxd4+ 13 Nxd4 Bxb5 14 Nxb5 Rb8 has also occurred, with a queen for three pieces and a very complicated game) 12 Qxc6+ Bd7 13 Qxc4



13 ... c5!

An excellent novelty, opening up a whole new line in the theory of the Catalan. The old game Aizenshtadt-Taimanov (Leningrad 1949) went 13 ... Rb8 14 b4 c5 15 Nc3 cxd4 16 Ne4 Bb5 17 Qa2 d3! with the initiative for Black (18 Rxa1 Rc8!), but Taimanov suggested 15 Qc3! cxb4 16 axb4 a5 17 Qxa1 axb4 18 Rc1, when White's two knights outweigh the rook, despite the strong passed b-pawn. Since that time the variation 5 ... Nc6 had been shelved.

Korchnoi gives an interesting explanation for the origin of the move 13 ... c5: 'One of the greatest experts on the Catalan Opening for White in the 1970s and 1980s was grandmaster Genna Sosonko. Once I noticed that with Black he was aiming to obtain this position. He had thought up something! But what? His opponents avoided the critical position. I spent several hours at home looking at this variation and found an improvement for Black!'

14 Qa2

Essentially the only move. The alternatives are bad for White: 14 Nc3? Qb6! (this move, given by Korchnoi in *Informator*, is more aggressive than 14 ... cxd4 15 Nxd4 Rc8 16 Qd3 e5), or 14 Ne5? Rc8 15 d5 Rb8!

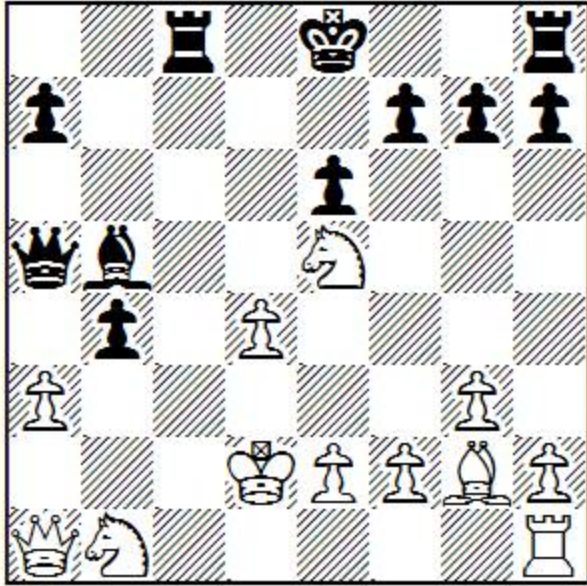
14 ... Qa5+ 15 b4?

In an unfamiliar and suddenly sharpened situation, White makes a serious mistake. Apparently the opponent's novelty had left Ivanchuk in a state of shock.

Immediately afterwards Korchnoi recommended 15 Nc3 cxd4 16 Nxd4 Rd8 17 Rxa1! (17 e3 e5 18 b4 Qa6 or my suggestion – 18 ... Qb6 19 Nd5 Be6!) 17 ... e5 18 b4 Qb6 19 Nc2, and this became the main line of the entire variation. After 19 ... Qxf2 White can play 20 Ne3 Be6+ 21 Ncd5 0-0 22 Qc4 Bxd5 23 Bxd5 Qxh2 ... $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ (Bareev-Adams, Dortmund 2000), or 20 Bd5 0-0 21 Qc4 Be6 22 Ne3 Qxh2 23 Qh4 Qxh4 24 g4 f5 25 Kc2 (25 Ke1!?) 25 ... Kf7 26 Rd1 f4 27 Nc4 $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ (Kasparov-Adams, Wijk aan Zee 2001).

I played Adams in the last round, and I was a point ahead of Anand and Kramnik. My colleagues smiled: is this really the way to play the opening, when you only need a draw? However, I sensed that White had some advantage and I wanted to play this complicated position. But then I realised that I had committed an inaccuracy and I offered a draw ... Exactly a year later, on the same stage, instead of 26 Rd1 there followed 26 Rg1! Rd7 (26 ... g6!? Ftacnik) 27 Bxe6+ Kxe6 28 Na4 Kf6 29 Nc5 Rd4? 30 Nxf5! ... 1-0 (Kasimdzhanov-Van Wely, Wijk aan Zee 2002). Of course, 29 ... Rc8 was essential, retaining considerable defensive resources.

15 ... cxb4 16 Qxa1 Rc8 17 Ne5 (17 Rc1?! Rxc1 18 Kxc1 0-0 with the threat of ... Rc8+ etc.) 17 ... Bb5

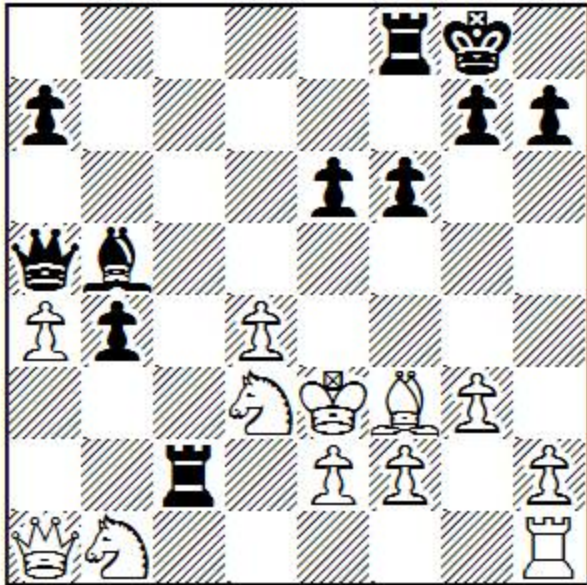


18 Ke3

A difficult choice in an indifferent position. 'After the game, analysts stated that 18 a4 was more tenacious, when White still has saving chances. Later games did not confirm this opinion.' (Korchnoi)

Indeed, after 18 ... 0-0 the white king is in a terrible position all the same: after 19 Nd3 both 19 ... Bxd3 20 Kxd3 e5! and the preparatory 19 ... b3+! are strong, while if 19 Qb2 (Korchnoi), then 19 ... Qxa4 20 Be4 Rfd8 with an attack. Or 19 Be4 f6! 20 Nd3 (20 Nf3 b3+ etc.) 20 ... f5 21 Bf3 b3+ 22 Nc3 Bxd3 and ... Qb4 ... 0-1 (Kaidanov-Goldin, Philadelphia 1998).

18 ... Rc2 (the decisive invasion) 19 Bf3 0-0 20 a4 f6 21 Nd3



21 ... Bc4

Threatening ... Ra2. From the computer's point of view, 21 ... Bxd3 22 Kxd3 Qc7 23 Ke3 Qc4 24 Rd1 Ra2 wins more simply, but a human goes his own way.

22 Nd2 Qg5+?!

Black could have immediately concluded matters by 22 ... Bxd3 23 exd3 (23 Kxd3 Rc3+ 24 Ke4 Qf5 mate) 23 ... Qg5+ (Korchnoi) 24 Ke4 f5+ 25 Ke5 f4+ 26 Kxe6 Re8+ 27 Kd7 Qd8 mate. However, he is still winning.

23 Nf4 e5 (23 ... Rc3+!? Korchnoi) 24 Nxc4 exf4+ 25 gxf4 Qf5! 26 Nd6 (26 Qb1 Re8+ or 26 Be4 Rc3+ etc. was no better) 26 ... Qe6+ 0-1

White resigns: 27 Be4 (otherwise ... Qb3+) 27 ... Rc3+ and ... Qxd6.

Thanks to this win, Viktor Lvovich firmly established himself in 2nd place – and he maintained it to the end of the tournament: 1. Kasparov – 12 out of 14; 2. Korchnoi – 8½; 3. Sax – 7; 4-5. Ivanchuk and Ljubojevic – 6½, etc.

The Interzonal tournament of the next cycle, held for the first time on the Swiss system (Manila, summer 1990), was marked by the resolute emergence into the arena of the generation of 20-year-olds, although some experienced fighters also qualified for the Candidates: 1-2. Gelfand and Ivanchuk – 9 out of 13; 3-4. Anand and Short – 8½; 5-11. Sax, Korchnoi, Hübner, Nikolic, Yudasin, Dolmatov and Dreev – 8, etc.

Together with Timman, Speelman and Yusupov (finalist and semi-finalists in the previous cycle) they made up seven match pairs, and then the seven winners were joined by Karpov (as participant in the 1990 world championship match) and so on.

In the spring, Korchnoi warmed up for the Interzonal with two four-player grandmaster tournaments – a triple-round event in Beersheva and a double-round event in Rotterdam. In both he finished first and, as later in Manila, he was undefeated throughout. It is amusing that the following fine game with the 26-year-old Israeli grandmaster Alon Greenfeld, played at the start in Beersheva, turned out to be the only one in the tournament to end decisively!

Game 43

V.Korchnoi-A.Greenfeld

Beersheva 1990

English Opening A30

1 c4 Nf6 2 Nc3 c5 3 Nf3 e6 4 g3 b6 5 Bg2 Bb7 6 0-0 Be7

After 6 ... a6 7 b3 d6 Korchnoi also played d2-d4, and after ... cxd4 he replied either Qxd4 – against S.Garcia (Moscow 1975), or Nxd4 – against Hjartarson (Reykjavik 1988) and Ivanchuk (Tilburg 1989).

7 b3

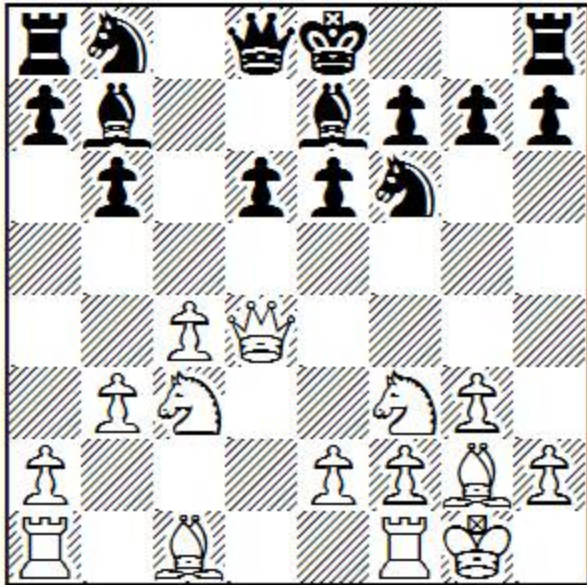
In order later, after d2-d4 and ... cxd4, to possibly recapture on d4 with the knight. After the direct 7 d4 cxd4 8 Qxd4 in the old days Korchnoi many times faced 8 ... Nc6 or 8 ... 0-0 and ... Nc6 (*Game No.16*), and in the 'hedgehog' era – 8 ... d6 followed by ... Nbd7.

7 ... d6

7 ... d5 8 cxd5 Nxd5 is good for Black, with equality. But, as Korchnoi aptly observed, hedgehog lovers do not want an equal game.

8 d4 (8 Bb2 0-0 9 e3 a6 10 d4 cxd4 11 Nxd4 is slower, Korchnoi-Portisch, 9th matchgame, Bad Kissingen 1983) **8 ... cxd4 9 Qxd4**

After 9 Nxd4 Bxg2 10 Kxg2 Qc7 11 e4 a6 12 Bb2 Qb7 13 Re1 0-0 Black has fewer problems (Korchnoi-Polugayevsky, Biel 1986).



Korchnoi has already commented on 'hedgehog' positions of this type (cf. *Game No.16*). And in the introduction to this game he adds: 'To some extent hedgehog lovers are right. They are convinced that the main thing in chess is not material, and not space, but the coordination and activity of the pieces – and this coordination can be achieved even in restricted space. And such play came into fashion. Whereas earlier it was considered extremely undesirable to concede the centre, now dozens of players, literally from the first moves, concede the centre and begin erecting their defences along the 6th rank. I think that the reader will understand why for me, brought up with an orthodox understanding of chess, the given game is very precious.'

9 ... Nbd7?!

Not the most accurate move order, which is also the case with 9 ... a6?! 10 Ba3! (preventing ... Nbd7) 10 ... 0-0 11 Rfd1 with pressure for White (Korchnoi-A.Greenfeld, Beersheva 1988). But nowadays everyone knows that 9 ... 0-0! is correct, for example: 10 Bb2 (if 10 Ba3, then 10 ... Na6!) 10 ... a6 11 Rfd1 Nbd7 12 Qd2 Qc7 13 Nd4 Bxg2 14 Kxg2 Qb7+ 15 f3 Ne5! ... ½-½ (Korchnoi-Polugayevsky, 11th matchgame, Buenos Aires 1980).

10 Nb5!

Korchnoi's novelty, which he first employed in the 6th game of his Candidates match with Hjartarson (Saint John 1988). By attacking the

d6-pawn, he causes a certain disharmony in the opponent's ranks.

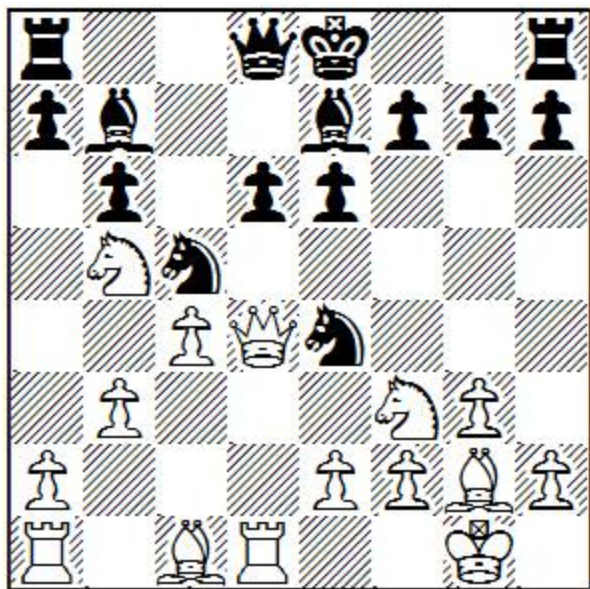
10 ... Nc5

If 10 ... Ne4? White was intending 11 Qxg7 Bf6 12 Qh6 Bxa1 13 Ng5! with a powerful attack. However, after 10 ... d5!? 11 cxd5 Bxd5 12 Qf4 0-0 13 Bb2 a6 14 Nc3 he would have had only a comparatively slight advantage.

11 Rd1 Nfe4?!

An unsuccessful piece of preparation by Greenfeld. He had already played this against Andersson (Thessaloniki Olympiad 1988) and lost, but now he had apparently found some improvement.

11 ... d5 was now essential, following the example of the aforementioned source game Korchnoi-Hjartarson, which was brilliantly won by the veteran: 12 cxd5 exd5 (Black also does not equalise fully after 12 ... Nxd5 13 e4 or 12 ... Bxd5 13 Qf4) 13 Bh3!? 0-0 14 Bb2 a6 15 Nc3 Re8 16 Rac1 Ne6? 17 Bxe6! fxe6 18 Na4 b5 19 Nc5 Bc8 20 Ne5 with a complete bind. The young Icelandic grandmaster clearly underestimated his opponent's strategic idea.



12 Qxg7!

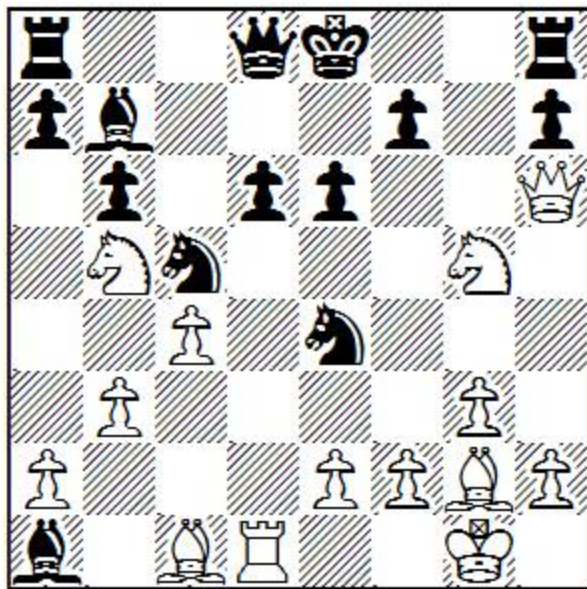
Another brilliant novelty! White gives up a rook and then begins an attack with his knights in the spirit of Morphy or Chigorin.

The Andersson-Greenfeld game went 12 b4 Bf6 13 Qe3 Bxa1 14 bxc5 bxc5 15 Ng5! Bd4 16 Nxd4 (16 Qf4! Qxg5 17 Nxd6+ is even

better) 16 ... cxd4 17 Rxd4 Nc5 18 Bxb7 Nxb7 19 Nxf7 Kxf7 20 Qf3+ Kg8 21 Qxb7 Rb8 22 Qe4 ... 1-0. On this occasion Greenfeld was apparently intending to try 14 ... 0-0 or 12 ... a6, but Korchnoi forestalled him, demonstrating his own, highly impressive interpretation of the variation.

12 ... Bf6 13 Qh6 Bxa1 14 Ng5!

A mind-boggling position, which to play for the first time is difficult as White (he is, after all, a rook down) and especially as Black: he can become confused in searching for the best defence!



14 ... Be5?

A seemingly natural, but incorrect move. Citing an extensive analysis by grandmaster Matthias Wahls, Korchnoi suggests that 'The only possibility of avoiding a rapid defeat is 14 ... Qf6!: 15 Nxe4 Nxe4 16 Bxe4 Qxh6 17 Bxh6 Bxe4 18 Nxd6+ Ke7 19 Nxe4 Be5 (19 ... Bf6? 20 Bc1!) 20 f4 Bb2 21 Rb1 Bd4+ 22 Kg2 Rhg8 (22 ... f6 23 e3! Bxe3 24 Bg7) 23 Bg5+ f6 24 Bh4 Rg6 25 Kf3 a5 (25 ... h5 26 b4! and there is no defence against the threat of e2-e3) 26 g4 – White has a clear positional advantage.'

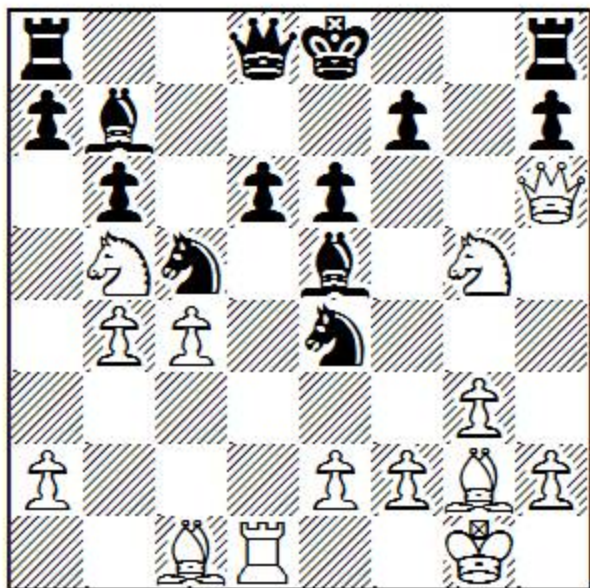
The immediate 25 b4!? Rc8 26 Kf3 (with the idea of 26 ... Rxc4? 27 e3) is perhaps even better. White has two pawns for the exchange and an obvious advantage in view of the unfortunate position of the black bishop. Therefore Black should defend with 20 ... Bf6 (S.Kuznetsov-

Mayorov, correspondence 1994) or 21 ... Bf6!? 22 Kf2 Rhg8 with good drawing chances.

15 b4!?

It is strange that in his book *My Best Games Volume 1* (2001) Korchnoi makes no comment at all on this move (nor does Ftacnik in *ChessBase*), although back in 1990 in *Informator* he indicated a simpler way to win – 15 Nxe4! Bxe4 (or 15 ... Nxe4 16 Bxe4 Bxe4 17 f4 etc.) 16 Bg5! f6 17 f4 fxg5 18 fxe5 with an irresistible attack. I would add 16 ... Qd7 17 f4! (or 17 b4 Bxg2 18 bxc5 Shchekachev-Kersten, Bad Zwesten 2003) 17 ... a6 18 fxe5 axb5 19 Rxd6 Qc7 (19 ... Bxg2 20 Qf6!) 20 Bxe4 Nxe4 21 Rxe6+!

In the game Petursson-Akesson (Stockholm 1991) the tempting 15 f4?! occurred, and after 15 ... Bf6? 16 Nxe4 Bxe4 17 b4 Bxg2 18 bxc5 Black's position collapsed. However, 15 ... Qf6! 16 Qxf6 Bxf6 17 Nxe4 Bxe4 18 Nxd6+ Ke7 19 Nxe4 Rad8 would have led to a roughly equal endgame.



15 ... Qf6

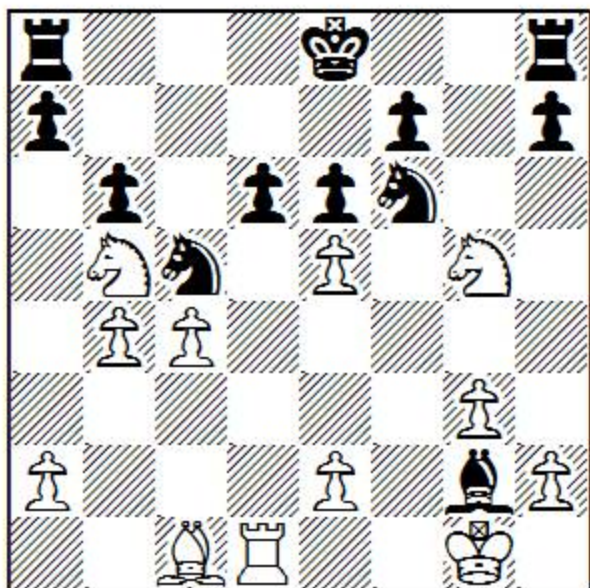
Comparatively the best chance. 15 ... Nc3 is weaker (as analysts have shown, other replies are also unsuitable) 16 Nxc3! (16 bxc5 Qf6! is not so clear) 16 ... Bxg2 17 bxc5 Bxc3 (17 ... Qf6 18 Qxf6 and Nb5!) 18 Kxg2 Qf6 19 Qxf6 Bxf6 20 Ne4 with an obvious advantage for

White (Tsesarsky-A.Greenfeld, Givatayim 1997), but 19 Qh5! dxc5 20 Ne4 Qg6 21 Qf3, winning, is more efficient..

16 Qxf6 Nxf6 (if 16 ... Bxf6 there would have followed 17 bxc5 Bxg5 18 Bxg5 0-0 19 cxd6 with a won ending) 17 f4!

According to Korchnoi, 17 bxc5 Bxg2 18 f4 was also possible, but here after 18 ... Bd4+! 19 R(N)xd4 dxc5 Black saves the game.

17 ... Bxg2 (17 ... Ba1? 18 Nxd6+! Ke7 19 bxc5 Bxg2 20 Ba3! bxc5 21 Kxg2 and wins) 18 fxe5



‘A picturesque position. Black is still a rook up, but he has three pieces hanging, plus the threat of Nc7+!’ (Korchnoi)

18 ... dxe5 (18 ... Bc6? 19 Nxd6+ Kf8 20 exf6) 19 bxc5 Bc6 20 Nc7+ Kf8?!

‘The losing move. More tenacious was 20 ... Ke7 21 Ba3! b5! 22 Nxa8 b4 23 Bxb4 Rxa8 24 Nf3 Nd7 25 Rxd7+ Kxd7 26 Nxe5+ Kc7 27 Ba5+ Kb7 28 Nxf7. White has good winning chances, but the battle is not yet over.’ (Korchnoi). But in my view, after 28 ... Be8 29 Ne5 Rc8 the endgame is still altogether unclear: why should Black lose when he is the exchange up?!

Therefore I would prefer 23 Bb2! Rxa8 (23 ... Bxa8 24 Bxe5 Rc8 25 Rf1 and wins) 24 Rf1! (not 24 Bxe5 Ne4) 24 ... Rg8 (24 ... Ne4 25 Rxf7+ Ke8 26 Rc7 Nxc5 27 Rxc6 Kd7 28 Ra6 and wins) 25 Bxe5 Rg6 (25 ... Ne4 26 Nxf7) 26 Bd6+ Ke8 27 Nf3 with an extra pawn and a technically won ending.

21 ... Ne4!? (instead of 21 ... b5) 22 Nxe4 Bxe4 is interesting, but here too after 23 c6+! Kf6 24 Nxa8 Rxa8 25 c7 Rc8 26 Bd6 Bf5 27 c5! b5 (27 ... bxc5 28 Rc1) 28 Rf1 Kg6 29 Bxe5 f6 30 Bd6 Black's position is unenviable.

Thus, based on all of the above analysis, it can be said that in fact 14 ... Be5? was already the losing move.

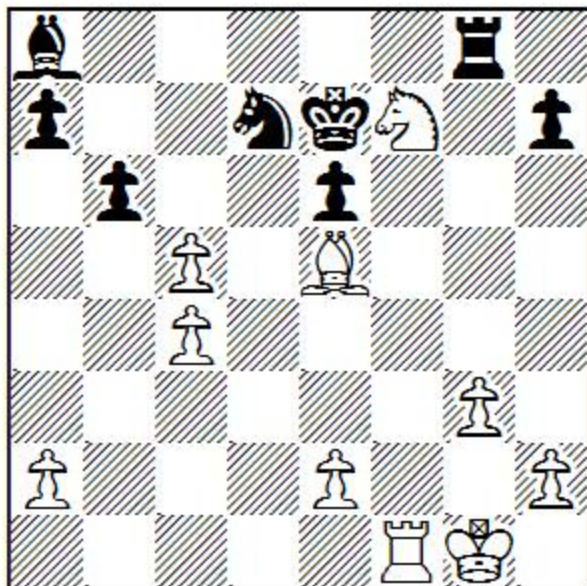
21 Nxa8 Bxa8 22 Bb2?!

Through inertia continuing to play for an attack. 'The suggestion of the commentators was more energetic: 22 cxb6 axb6 23 Rd8+ Kg7 24 Rxh8 Kxh8 25 Nxf7+ and then Nxe5. I was afraid that after 22 cxb6 Black would move his king to g7, but he would hardly have been able to hold a position where he was two pawns down, with one of them already on the 7th rank!' (Korchnoi). That is, 23 bxa7 Rc8 24 Be3 with an easy win.

22 ... Rg8 (22 ... Kg7 23 Bxe5 Kg6 24 Rf1 was no better) 23 Bxe5 Ke7

If 23 ... Ne8, then 24 Nxh7+ Ke7 25 Bd6+ Kd7 26 Bf4+. Black has acquired some practical saving chances, but White has not thrown away the win.

24 Rf1 Nd7 (or 24 ... Rg6 25 cxb6 axb6 26 Bxf6+ Rxf6 27 Rxf6 Kxf6 28 Nxh7+ Kf5 29 h4) 25 Nxf7



25 ... bxc5

Relying on the opposite-coloured bishops. Korchnoi attaches a question mark to this move, recommending 25 ... Nxc5 26 Bd6+ Kd7 27 Bxc5 bxc5, but after 26 Nh6! Rg6 27 Rf7+ White also would have won.

26 Bd6+ Ke8 27 Bc7 Ke7 (27 ... Rf8(g7) 28 Nd6+, penetrating with the knight to c8) 28 Rf4 Bc6 (28 ... Rg7 29 Nd6 a6 30 Ne4) 29 Kf2 Rg7

If 29 ... Ba4!?, then 30 Bd6+ Ke8 31 h4 is good. White accurately converts his material and positional advantage.

30 Ne5! Nxe5 31 Bxe5 Rg6 (31 ... Rf7 32 Bd6+) 32 Rh4 h6 33 Bf4 Bb7 34 Ke3 Ba6 35 Bxh6 e5 (35 ... Bxc4 36 Rxc4 Rxh6 37 Rxc5 Rxh2 38 Ra5 Korchnoi) 36 Kd3 Rd6+ 37 Kc3 1-0

37 ... Rd4 38 Be3 etc.

A very striking game! In the pre-computer era Korchnoi found and developed a risky gambit idea, which radically changed the character of the battle. His opponent was a grandmaster who had devoted much attention to the opening and was reputed to be an excellent analyst, but in the given instance, already at a very early stage, he fell victim to Korchnoi's vivid imagination ...

In 1991 Korchnoi won his Candidates match with Sax on a tie-break (3-3; 2½-1½), but in his next, quarter-final match he lost to Timman (2½-4½). In the next Interzonal tournament (Biel 1993) he fought with all his might: he started with 2 out of 2, for six rounds he was in the leading group, he responded to two defeats with a couple of wins, and only after losing in the penultimate round to Anand (a time-trouble blunder in an equal ending) did he part with the hope of becoming one of the Candidates for the crown for the 11th time(!).

Not long before this Korchnoi played an eight-game training match with the 25-year-old Dutch grandmaster Jeroen Piket, which he won by the crushing score 6-2 (+4=4). In the 3rd game Piket was given a good lesson with Black in the Tarrasch Defence.

Game 44

V.Korchnoi-J.Piket

Match, Nijmegen 1993, 3rd game

Queen's Gambit D34

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 Nf3 c5 4 cxd5 exd5 5 g3 Nc6 6 Bg2 Nf6 7 0-0 Be7 8 Nc3 0-0 9 Bg5 Be6 (is sounder – *Volume 3, Game No.75*) 10 dxc5 Bxc5 11 Rc1

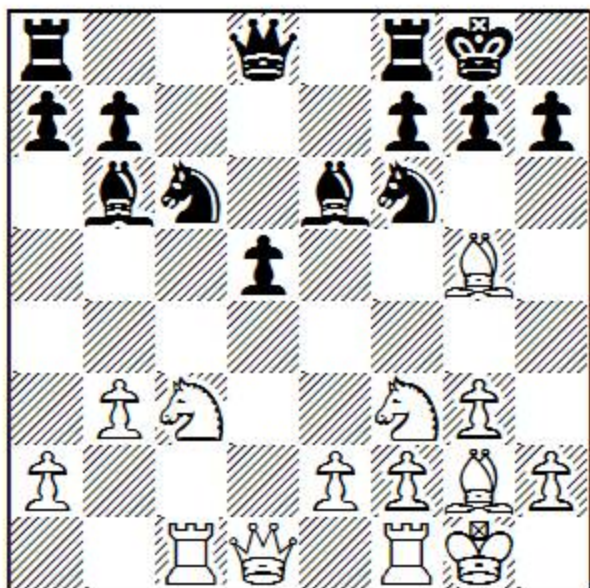
Black was hoping to hold out in the inferior endgame after 11 Bxf6!? (11 Na4 – *Volume 2, Game No.45*) 11 ... Qxf6 12 Nxd5 Qxb2 13 Nc7 Rad8 14 Qc1 Qxc1 15 Raxc1 and Nxe6 (Rubinstein-Schlechter, Vienna 1908; Petrosian-Spassky, 16th matchgame, Moscow 1969), but Korchnoi has a different plan.

11 ... Bb6?!

It is better to play 11 ... Be7 12 Nd4, when 12 ... Nxd4?! 13 Qxd4 leads to an old *tabiya*, known from the games Rubinstein-Salwe (Lodz 1908) and Marshall-Rubinstein (Lodz 1908; Karlsbad 1911), and 12 ... h6 – to more modern positions of the type 13 Be3 Qd7 14 Qa4 Bh3 with an acceptable game (Korchnoi-Nunn, Hastings 1975/76).

12 b3!

A very strong, deep move of Rubinstein, creating the threat of Bxf6 and Nxd5.



12 ... d4?!

12 ... Re8 13 e3! (Rubinstein-Lasker, Berlin 1918) leads to a slight but enduring advantage for White. The move in the game allows the spoiling of Black's pawns, making it even harder for him to equalise.

13 Ne4 Qe7 (vacating the d8-square for the rook) **14 Nh4!?**

Again a novelty, and in a rare variation! Before this 14 Nxf6+ or 14 Nfd2 had been played.

14 ... Kh8 15 Bxf6 gxf6 16 Qd2 Ne5 (16 ... f5? 17 Qh6! fxe4 18 Bxe4 f5 19 Ng6+) 17 Qh6 Ng6 18 Qh5!, and after a tough struggle, not without its mistakes, White won the game. In the end, Piket, like many of Korchnoi's other young opponents, was unable to withstand the tension!

I think that after this match catastrophe Piket developed a 'Korchnoi complex': from then on Jeroen normally played very badly and unsuccessfully against him. Thus in 2000 in Wijk aan Zee the Dutchman was not in bad form – he beat Timman and Short, and made draws with me, Kramnik and Anand, but in the last round he was unable to withstand the onslaught of Korchnoi, who was on a minus score and was aiming to improve his affairs at least a little.

In Groningen at the end of 1993 there took place a qualifying tournament for the world championship of the recently created Professional Chess Association (PCA), which was superior even to an Interzonal in strength. In the eleven rounds Korchnoi managed to win only one game, but what a game! And, incidentally, again against a young grandmaster.

Game 45

G.Serper-V.Korchnoi

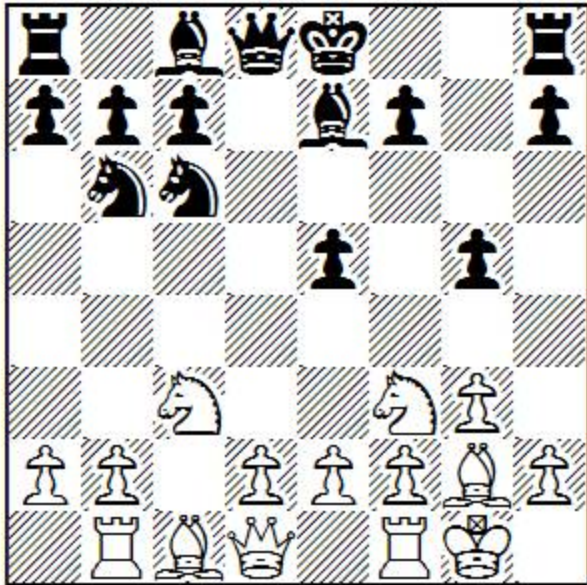
Groningen 1993, 9th round

English Opening A29

1 c4 Nf6 2 Nc3 e5 3 Nf3 Nc6 4 g3 d5 5 cxd5 Nxd5 6 Bg2 Nb6 7 0-0 Be7 8 Rb1 g5!?

Instead of the usual 8 ... 0-0 9 b4! (an example: Kasparov-Timman, Wijk aan Zee 2001). After this game the audacious lunge 8 ... g5 became quite popular, although, in my view, given accurate play by White it cannot achieve anything good for Black. It is another matter when you encounter such a move for the first time ...

'In my ardour to try an experiment, I was inspired by the following remarkable, but nearly forgotten game, Smyslov-Korchnoi (Moscow 1960): 1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Nf6 5 Nc3 g6 6 Be2 Bg7 7 Nb3 Nc6 8 g4 b6 (8 ... d5!?) 9 f4 Bb7 10 Bf3 0-0 11 h4 a5 12 a4 Nb4 13 h5 d5 14 e5 Nxc4 15 Nd4 Nh6 16 hxg6 fxg6 17 Ne6 Qd7 18 Nxf8 Rxf8 19 Nb5 d4 20 Bxb7 Qxb7 21 0-0 Nf5 22 Nxd4 Nxd4 23 Qxd4 Qc8 24 Qe4 Nxc2 with a draw on the 37th move.' (Korchnoi)



9 d3

If 9 d4, then 9 ... exd4 10 Nb5 Bf5 11 Ra1 Be4 is equal (Claesen-M.Gurevich, Antwerp 1994). The gambit 9 b4!? is more interesting: 9 ... g4 10 Ne1 Nxb4 11 Nc2 Nc6!? 12 Bxc6+! bxc6 13 d4 with sharp play (Gulko-Benjamin, USA Championship 1997; Khalifman-Lutz, New Delhi 2000).

9 ... h5

A novelty. 9 ... g4 is inadequate: 10 Ne1 h5 11 Nc2 h4 12 b4, as in the source game Hodgson-Bareev (Belgrade 1993). However, Korchnoi did not know about this game and did not consider 9 ... h5 to be an improvement. 'A worthwhile try is the set-up chosen by Smyslov: 9 ... f5 and ... Bf6.'

10 a3 h4 11 b4 hxg3 12 hxg3 a6 13 b5 Nd4?! (a surprise, which confuses White) 14 bxa6?

14 Nxe5 Qd6 15 f4! was correct (this move was overlooked by Serper) 15 ... Nf5 (but not 15 ... Qc5 16 e3 or 15 ... gxf4 16 Nxf7! Kxf7 17 Bxf4 Qc5 18 e3 Nf5 19 Ne4 Qxa3 20 g4) 16 Ne4 Qd4+ 17 Rf2 gxf4, and after 18 Bxf4 Nd5 'Black's position is quite active. Still, it is questionable whether he has proper compensation for the pawn.' (Korchnoi)

18 Bb2! is even stronger: 18 ... Qa4 (18 ... Qd8 19 Rxf4 and wins) 19 Qc1! fxc3 20 Rf4, and the black queen is unexpectedly trapped.

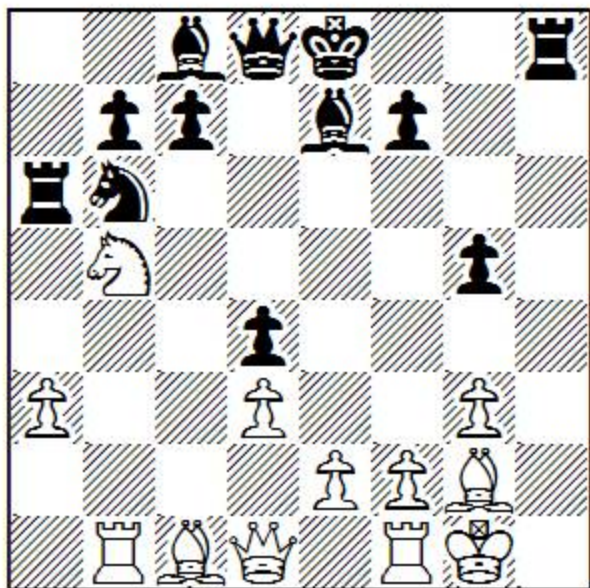
Thus Korchnoi's bold attack was not fully correct, but his opponent went wrong in the complications.

14 ... Rxa6 15 Nxd4?

Again 15 Nxe5 was preferable – now 15 ... Qd6 16 f4! Nf5 is bad on account of 17 Nb5, and so Black was planning 15 ... Bxa3 'with roughly equal chances.'

15 ... exd4 16 Nb5?!

Overlooking Black's reply. 'Here we come across a phenomenon which I would like to call the "young Tal effect",' writes Korchnoi about White's 14th-16th moves. 'Playing a game with all your energy, emanating a kind of hypnotic influence and an air of absolute confidence, a player can sometimes convince his opponent that his tricks are watertight and absolutely irrefutable! I knew Tal very well, and he was aware, indeed, proud of his hypnotic abilities. As for me, I have never had any idea of what happens *off* the board – until Serper started to show me variations in the post-mortem analysis.' (Korchnoi)



16 ... Na4! (with the threat of ... c7-c6) 17 e3 c6 18 Nxd4 Nc3 19 Qc2 Nxb1 20 Qxb1 Qd6 21 Qb3?

21 e4! Qh6 22 Re1 was more tenacious (Korchnoi).

21 ... Qh6 22 Re1 c5 23 Nf3 Bh3 24 Qxb7 Bxg2 25 Qc8+ Bd8 26 Kxg2 Re6! 27 Ng1 (if 27 Kf1, then 27 ... Qh3+ 28 Ke2 Rxe3+!) **27 ... Qh1+ 28 Kf1 Rf6**, and Black gained a spectacular win with a direct attack on the king (0-1).

Many other young players also found it hard to withstand such a creative approach by Korchnoi to the solving of complex problems, and his primordial, 'crooked' style. When I met him at the super-tournament in the Swiss town of Horgen (1994), before my eyes, with the black pieces, he completely perplexed Boris Gelfand – a good theoretician and one of the top ten grandmasters in the world, who had played in several Candidates matches.

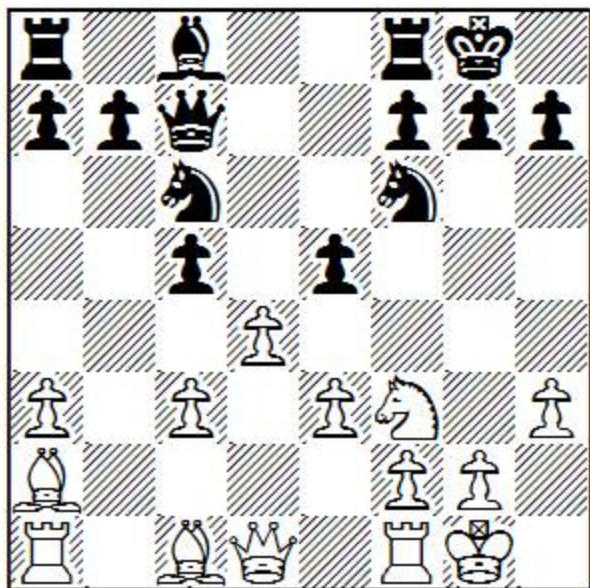
Game 46

B.Gelfand-V.Korchnoi

Horgen 1994

Nimzo-Indian Defence E59

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 (Boris far more often plays 3 Nf3) 3 ... Bb4 4 e3 c5 5 Bd3 d5 6 Nf3 0-0 7 0-0 Nc6 8 a3 Bxc3 9 bxc3 dxc4 10 Bxc4 Qc7 11 Ba2 e5 12 h3



12 ... b6!? (instead of the traditional 12 ... e4 – a novelty with the idea of ... e5-e4 and ... Ba6-d3; currently 12 ... Bf5 is fashionable) 13 Qc2?!

After a long think Gelfand does not choose the best reply. 13 Re1 e4 14 Nd2 leads to a roughly equal game (Knaak-Korchnoi, Baden-Baden 1995).

But the main continuation became 13 d5 e4 (or 13 ... Rd8 14 e4) 14 dxc6 (if 14 Nh2 or 14 Nd2, then 14 ... Ne5 with equality) 14 ... exf3 15

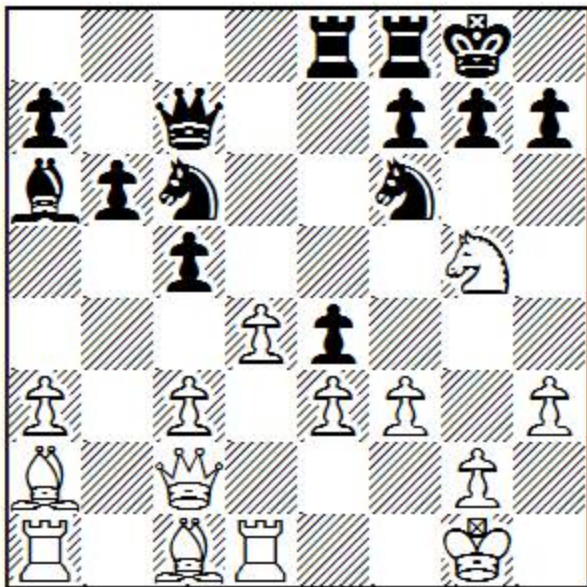
Qxf3 with some advantage for White. Here 15 ... Qe5 or 15 ... Ba6 used to be played (these moves are considered by Korchnoi), but then there appeared 15 ... Be6!? 16 Bxe6 fxe6 17 c4 Rac8 18 Bb2 Qxc6 (Yakovich-Tiviakov, Elista 2001) or first 18 ... Ne8 (Zifroni-Iordachescu, Panormo 2001), and in either case Black still has to fight for equality.

Gelfand did not want to simplify the position immediately, but his move allowed the opponent to brilliantly carry out his plan. At that time I had only a rather vague impression of this variation and, observing the game at odd moments, I was very surprised when the black bishop appeared at d3 within a few moves. A couple of days later, when I was chatting with Boris, we talked admiringly about the grand scale of Korchnoi's ideas ...

13 ... e4 14 Ng5 Ba6 15 Rd1 (15 Nxe4 Nxe4 16 Qxe4 Bxf1 17 Kxf1 Rae8 etc. is inadequate for White) 15 ... Rae8!

But not immediately 15 ... Bd3 – after 16 Rxd3 exd3 17 Qxd3 'White has excellent chances of seizing the initiative, thanks to his strong pawn centre and the awakening of his two slumbering bishops.' (Korchnoi)

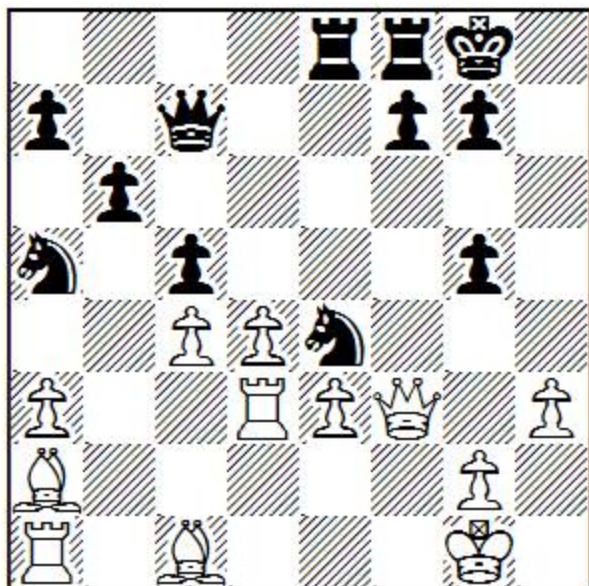
16 f3 (16 d5?! Na5)



16 ... Bd3 17 Qf2 (17 Rxd3?! exd3 18 Qxd3 Na5 is now in Black's favour: the move f2-f3 has weakened the king's defences and taken away the f3-square from the knight at g5) 17 ... h6

17 ... Na5 (Korchnoi) or 17 ... c4 also came into consideration.

18 fxe4 (after 18 Nxe4 Bxe4 19 fxe4 Nxe4 20 Qc2! Qd6!, by restraining the bishops, Black would also have retained some advantage) 18 ... hxc5 19 Rxd3 Nxe4 20 Qf3 Na5 (with the threat of ... c5-c4) 21 c4



21 ... b5! (energetic play!) 22 cxb5 c4 23 Rd1 Nb3 24 Bxb3 cxb3 25 Rb1!

The only defence against the quick-moving passed pawn: it is bad to play either 25 Bd2 Nxd2 26 Rxd2 Qc3 and ... Rxe3 (Korchnoi), or 25 a4 Qc2!

25 ... Nc3 26 Rxb3 Nxd1 27 Qxd1

By giving up the exchange for two pawns, White almost equalised, but ... he fell into terrible time-trouble and after a blunder on the 36th move he was nevertheless forced to capitulate (0-1).

After this painful defeat Gelfand also lost to me and to Yusupov. But in the next round Korchnoi won against Lautier, and he and I were leading the tournament with 4 points out of 5. Then Viktor Lvovich reduced speed and allowed Shirov and Yusupov to go half a point ahead of him.

But at the very finish, playing Black against the 15-year-old Peter Leko, who had then only just entered the world arena, he fought desperately for the win which would enable him to cling on to a share of 2nd place (it need hardly be said that the opening was a French Defence). Throughout the tournament Peter had played very cautiously,

and Korchnoi, I remember, even speculated: 'I wonder how Peter will play when he's 50, if he plays like *this* at the age of 15?' But in this encounter the young Hungarian had to engage in an open battle, and after great complications and a wild time scramble it ended in a draw.

At the Turn of the Century

At the end of 1994 Korchnoi appeared for the Swiss team at the Olympiad in Moscow. This was his third visit to his homeland since his defection back in 1976. In the summer of 1990 the USSR President Mikhail Gorbachov had restored Soviet citizenship to many cultural figures who were out of favour, including Korchnoi. It stands to reason that Viktor Lvovich was pleased with this decision, stating: 'I see this as a recognition of my contribution to the development of chess in the USSR.' Nevertheless, he declined the Soviet offer, since he was waiting to obtain Swiss citizenship. And only after receiving it, did he fly in the spring of 1992 to his native Leningrad, which by that time had already been renamed St Petersburg. And in the spring of 1994 he also visited Moscow, where he played in the PCA 'Kremlin Stars' tournament (the first stage of the rapidplay Intel Grand Prix – later Korchnoi also played in New York, London and Paris).

Since then he has happily taken part in chess events held on the territory of the former USSR. Perhaps the most interesting of these was the grandmaster tournament in St Petersburg (April 1997), which assembled virtually the entire cream of Leningrad chess from the second half of the 20th century, apart from Spassky and Taimanov. Meeting for the first time on the same stage were six emigrants (Korchnoi, Sosonko, Tseitlin, Salov, Yudasin and Komarov), and six 'native' St Petersburg players (Khalifman, Svidler, Sakaev, Epishin, Aseev and S.Ivanov).

Among the tournament favourites was the 20-year-old two-times Russian Champion Peter Svidler, and rightly so: he soon won the national championship for the third time, shared victory with me and Kramnik in Tilburg (1997) and became one of the leading grandmasters in the world. But on this occasion Peter considerably underperformed, and the reason for this was evidently the following wonderful game, prior to which both players had 3 points out of 6 and still retained hopes of a successful finish. The age difference between them was 45 years!

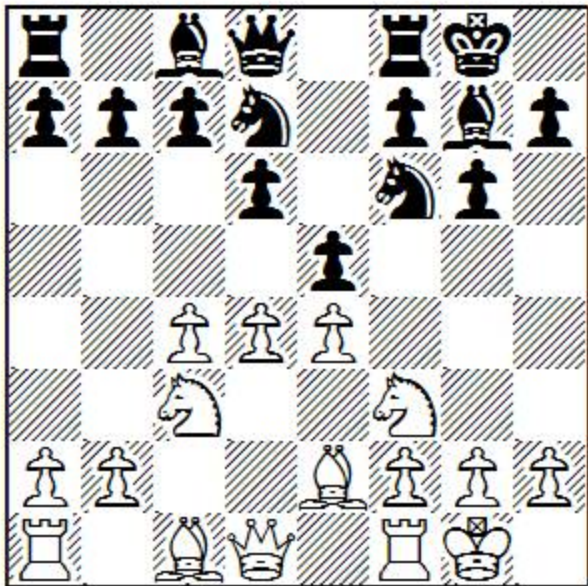
Game 47

V.Korchnoi-P.Svidler

St Petersburg 1997

King's Indian Defence E94

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 0-0 5 Be2 d6 6 Nf3 e5 7 0-0 Nbd7



The more fashionable move is 7 ... Nc6 (*Game Nos.39-41*), but Svidler liked to play in the old manner, often outplaying his opponents in the resulting complicated positions, even though they are somewhat inferior for Black.

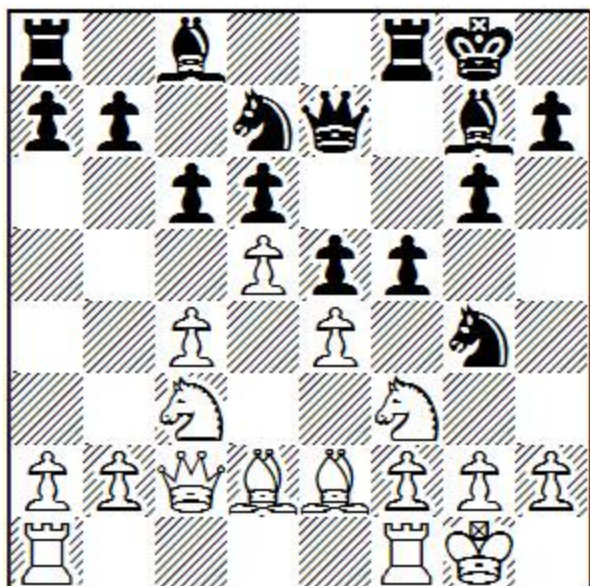
‘It is laudable that a young player should aim to get to know the repertoire of the old masters – they had only a fraction of the present-day information, but they understood the game no worse than modern grandmasters!’ (Korchnoi)

8 Be3 Qe7 (8 ... Re8 9 d5!) 9 Qc2 Ng4 (9 ... exd4!?) 10 Bg5 f6 11 Bd2 c6 12 d5!

In the game Schandorff-Svidler (Torshavn 1997), played a couple of months earlier, Black had achieved a good game after 12 h3 Nh6 13 Rad1 f5 14 Bg5 Qe8 15 dxe5 dxe5 16 exf5 gxf5 17 Rfe1 e4 18 Nh2 Qg6 19 Bf4 Nf7 20 Nf1 Nc5 and in the end he won.

12 ... f5

If 12 ... c5?! White was planning 13 Nb5 with the idea of 13 ... Nb6 14 b4! a6 15 bxc5 or 13 ... Nb8 14 Ne1, retaining the initiative.



13 Ng5!

An unexpected novelty! The old game Korchnoi-Mestel (Beersheva 1984) went 13 exf5!? gxf5 14 Ng5 Ndf6 15 f3 Nh6 16 Bd3 Bd7 17 Rae1 with some advantage for White – after 17 ... Kh8 18 Kh1 Nfg8?! 19 f4! e4? 20 Ncxe4! fxe4 21 Bxe4 he gained excellent compensation for the piece and won on the 43rd move. And again Korchnoi makes a remarkable comment:

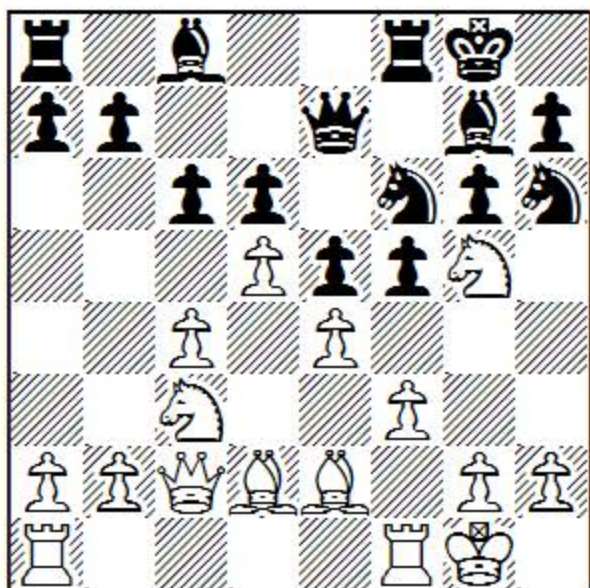
‘Malicious tongues will say: Svidler was unlucky – his preparations for this meeting were based on a game that I had played 13 years earlier, and he found an improvement there. But I had forgotten that game, and played differently, and even, they will say, more strongly. Well, firstly, it would have been good for Emanuel Lasker to remember his games, and during those 13 years I had played twice as many games as Doctor (of Philosophy) Lasker played in his entire chess career! And secondly, would it not be tedious, especially considering the number of games that I have played, to repeat the same thing several times? Even for the sake of practical success. For me, with my character, it would be rather tedious. And one more point: I do not consider myself to be such a classical player, that it is forbidden to make changes. And I make changes with particular pleasure, improving

on my own play. Therefore, with only rare exceptions, I play the opening of every game as if for the first time in my life.'

13 ... Ndf6?!

Strangely enough, this is almost the decisive mistake! 13 ... Nc5?! is also insufficient: 14 b4 Nxe4 (14 ... Na6 15 a3 or, according to Khalifman, 15 dxc6 bxc6 16 b5 with the seizure of the d5-square) 15 Ngxe4 fxe4 16 dxc6 bxc6 17 Qxe4, and 'the c6-pawn would have been lost' (Korchnoi). Therefore the commentators recommended the not very pretty move 13 ... Nb6, which, although it does not equalise, would nevertheless have allowed Black to put up a tough defence.

14 f3 Nh6



15 c5! (temporarily sacrificing a pawn, White exploits the lack of harmony in the placing of the enemy pieces) **15 ... cxd5**

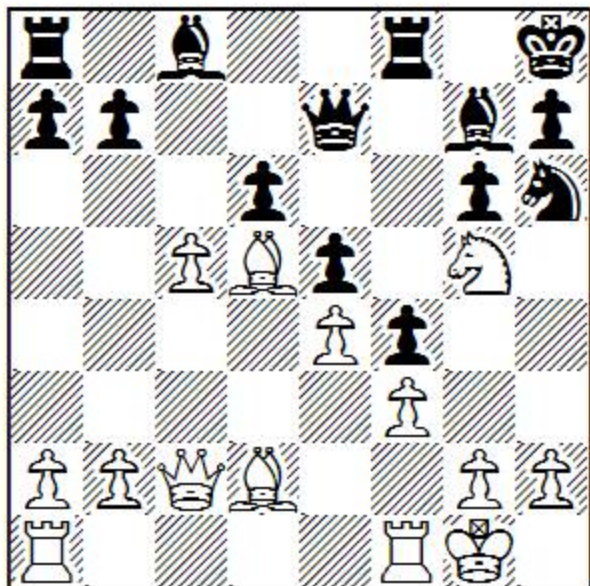
As shown by Korchnoi, Black also has great difficulties after 15 ... dxc5 16 dxc6 bxc6 17 Na4 or 16 ... b6 17 Nd5 etc.

16 Nxd5!

This is much stronger than 16 exd5 (Khuzman) 16 ... dxc5 17 Bc4 Kh8 – here Black can still hold on somehow, whereas in the game White very quickly builds up very strong pressure (true, for this he needs to demonstrate remarkable inventiveness).

16 ... Nxd5 17 Bc4! (the decisive emergence of the bishop onto the attacking diagonal) **17 ... f4** (17 ... dxc5 18 Bxd5+ Kh8 19 Rac1 fxe4 20

Nxe4 is unacceptable for Black) 18 Bxd5+ Kh8



19 h4!

Another energetic move – the only one maintaining the flame of the initiative!

19 ... dxc5 20 Rac1 Ng8 21 Qxc5 h6 22 Qxe7

Up till now the play has been forced. Here White could have considered 22 Bb4!? Qxc5+ (22 ... Qe8 23 Qc7 hxg5 24 hxg5 is hardly suitable) 23 Bxc5 hxg5 24 hxg5 Rd8 25 Kf2 Nf6 26 gxf6 Bxf6 27 Rh1+ Kg7 28 Rh2 g5! (28 ... Bd7 29 Rch1 Rh8 30 Rxh8 Rxh8 31 Rxh8 and Bxb7, winning) 29 g4! (29 Rch1 Bf5!) 29 ... Kg6 30 b4 with advantage. But Korchnoi had devised a brilliant combination!

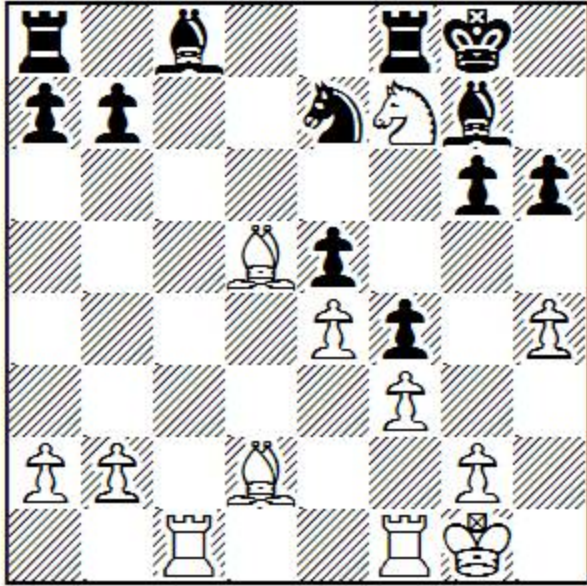
22 ... Nxe7 23 Nf7+! Kg8

After this move Svidler probably thought that the worst was over for Black. 23 ... Kh7 24 Bb4 was weaker, for example:

1) 24 ... Nxd5 25 Bxf8 Ne3 26 Rc7 Bxf8 27 Rfc1 Kg8 28 Nxe5 Be6 29 Nxc6 Bd6 30 Rxb7 (Korchnoi) 30 ... Rb8 31 Ne7+ Kf8 32 Rxb8+ Bxb8 33 Nc6 Bd6 34 e5 Bc7 35 Nd4 Bc4 36 Rxc4! Nxc4 37 Ne6+ and Nxc7 with an easy win;

2) 24 ... Re8 25 Nd6 Nxd5 26 Nxe8 Nxb4 27 Rc7 Kg8 28 Rxg7+ Kf8 29 Nc7 or 25 ... Rd8 26 Bxb7 Rb8 27 Nxc8 Nxc8 28 Ba5 (Korchnoi), also winning.

But here there followed a thunderous quiet move.



24 Bb3!!

As Korchnoi admitted, it was not easy for him to refrain from 24 Nxh6+ Kh7 25 Ng4. But in this case after 25 ... Nxd5 (not immediately 25 ... Rd8 because of 26 Ba5!) 26 exd5 Rd8 27 Rc7 Kg8! 28 Bc3 Rxd5 29 Re1 Bxg4 30 fxc4 b5 Black would have acquired drawing chances.

24 ... Rxf7 25 Rc7 Bf6

Nothing was changed by 25 ... Bf8 26 Bb4 Kg7 27 Rfc1 (Korchnoi) or 25 ... Kf8 (KhuzmanKhuzman) 26 Bb4 Bf6 27 Rd1! a5 28 Rd8+ Kg7 29 Ba3(d6) and wins.

26 Bb4 Kg7 27 Rfc1

A rare construction in grandmaster practice. Such a thing is difficult to calculate in advance: suppose Black were able to disentangle himself?! Then he would have the advantage! But no, Korchnoi's intuition and calculation did not deceive him: there is no longer any salvation. Although for a long time even the 'all-seeing' machine does not understand this ...

27 ... a5 28 Ba3! (not 28 Bd6? Ra6) 28 ... b5 29 Bc5 (29 Bxf7? b4 30 Bd5 Rb8) 29 ... Ba6 30 Bxf7 Kxf7 31 h5! 1-0

The final stroke. Black resigned, avoiding unnecessary suffering after 31 ... gxh5 32 Bxe7 Bxe7 33 R1c6 and Rxh6.

A deep and far from obvious combination – not without reason did Spassky, the honoured guest of the tournament, award Korchnoi the prize for the most brilliant game. And Svidler, after stopping the clocks, shook his opponent's hand and said: 'It's a pity that I'm not wearing a hat – I would have raised it to you!' According to Alexander Khalifman, Peter was in a state of shock after this defeat and later he asked in surprise: 'Look what's going on: in 1984 Korchnoi played quite well, now he plays even better, so what will happen in 2010?'

Yes, even at the age of 66 Viktor Lvovich played with truly youthful ardour! In the 9th round he beat Sakaev in fine style, employing a novelty in a favourite variation of his since the time of Baguio (1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Bb4 4 e3 c5 5 Ne2 cxd4 6 exd4 d5 7 c5 Ne4 8 g3!?), in the 10th round he overcame Epishin with Black in a topical variation of the Queen's Gambit Accepted, and in the end, scoring 7 out of 11, he shared victory in the tournament with Khalifman and Salov. 'I have to admit,' said Korchnoi in an interview, 'that the support of the auditorium, which was always full, inspired me, and for perhaps the first time in my life I was aware of invisible energy from the spectators.'

The duel with Epishin had an unusual epilogue: a month later, in the European Team Championship, Alexander Beliavsky (incidentally, now the only four-times USSR Champion still alive, apart from Korchnoi) was defeated in the same way. My attention was attracted by both the opening plan, and the comments of the winner.

Game 48

A.Beliavsky-V.Korchnoi

Pula 1997

Queen's Gambit Accepted D20

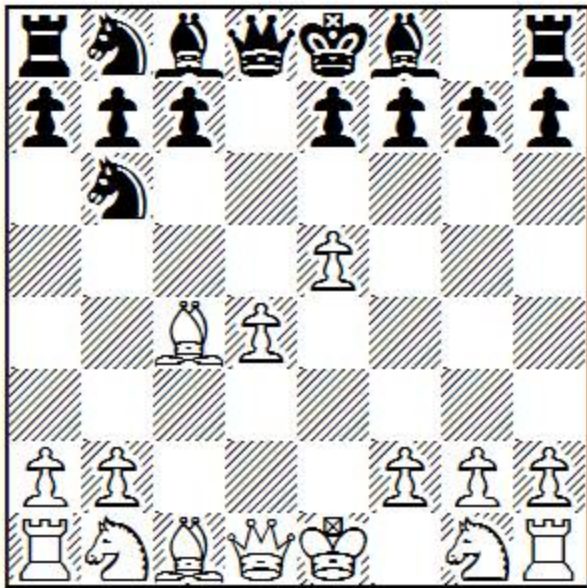
1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4

'The Queen's Gambit Accepted: possibly again the influence of the world champions?' – this was how Korchnoi commented on the move of his opponent Petersons in 1965 (having in mind the influence of Petrosian, who successfully played this opening in his match with Botvinnik), and in 1995 he thought it necessary to add: 'World champions undoubtedly influence chess fashion. Compare the play in present-day tournaments with those of the 1970s and the early 1980s! This is Kasparov's doing ... '

3 e4 Nf6

‘Generally speaking, I am convinced that the strongest reply is 3 ... e5: Black strikes at the centre, not forgetting about the development of his pieces. But in practice it is by no means always – especially in the opening – that the strongest moves are chosen, but rather “that which is interesting”. Thus here I was interested in an opening position that is soon reached, perhaps because it reminded me of the Alekhine Defence that I once used to play.’ (Korchnoi)

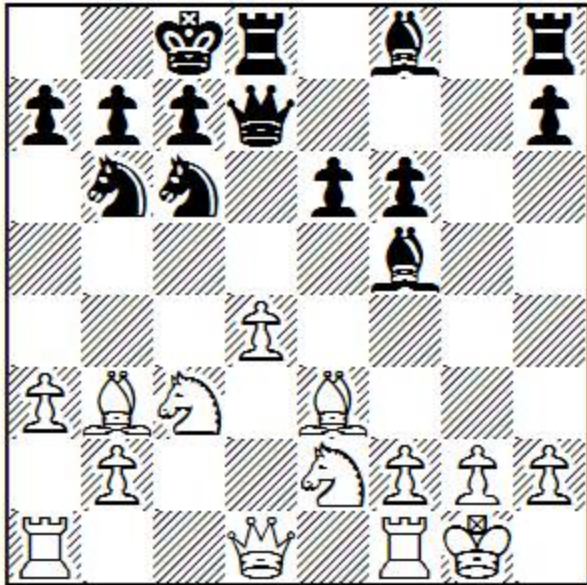
4 e5 Nd5 5 Bxc4 Nb6



6 Bb3 (according to Korchnoi, 6 Bd3 is better) 6 ... Nc6 7 Ne2 Bf5 8 Nbc3 e6 9 a3 Qd7 10 0-0 0-0-0!?

This is sharper than 10 ... Be7 (Granda-Korchnoi, Wijk aan Zee 1997).

11 Be3 f6 (a later experiment was 11 ... h5 12 Qc1 f6 13 Rd1 Qf7 14 exf6 gxf6 Van Wely-Korchnoi, Wijk aan Zee 2000) 12 exf6 gxf6

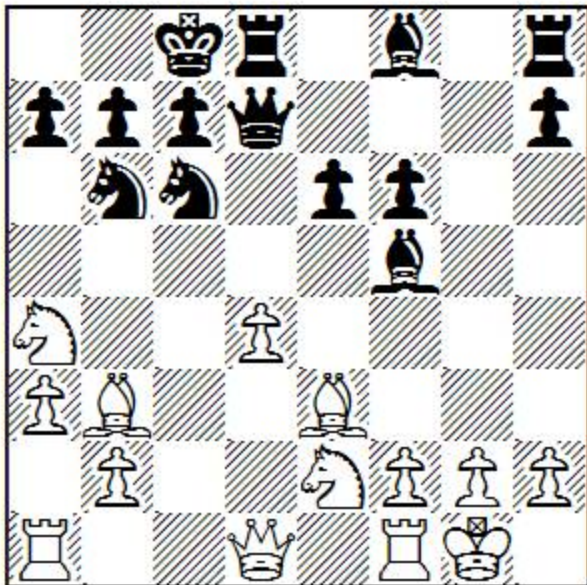


‘At the time when this game was played, the theory of this position was still insufficiently developed. However, Beliavsky does not particularly need theoretical recommendations. There are players who make use of theory, and they are the overwhelming majority, and there are also creators of theory. Beliavsky is one of the latter. Without false modesty, I would also assign myself to the creators of chess theory. It is natural that for pioneers, blazing new trails, things do not always turn out smoothly, much to the joy of the users ... ’ (Korchnoi)

13 Na4

A novelty. Epishin ‘burned his fingers’ after 13 Re1 Na5 14 Bf4? e5! 15 Be3 (15 dxe5?! Qc6) 15 ... h5 16 Rc1? (16 dxe5!) 16 ... Nbc4 17 Bxc4 Nxc4 18 Qb3 (18 dxe5!?) 18 ... Nxe3 19 fxe3 Be6! 20 Qb5 Bh6 21 Qxd7+ Rxd7 22 Kf2 h4 23 Ne4 Bd5! etc.

Also known was the comparatively better move 13 Ng3, to which Black used to reply 13 ... Bg6, but in the game Piket-Korchnoi (Batumi 1999), not wishing to waste a tempo, he replied 13 ... Nxd4, and after 14 Bxd4 Qxd4 15 Nb5 Qxd1 16 Rfxd1 Bc5 17 Nxf5 exf5 he held this slightly inferior endgame.



13 ... h5 14 Rc1 h4 15 Nc5 Bxc5 16 Rxc5 Kb8 with a comfortable game for Black. By the 30th move he thoroughly outplayed his opponent and soon gained a deserved victory (0-1).

In September 1997 Korchnoi played a match of six games with the rising start of French chess, the 14-year-old Etienne Bacrot and won 4-2. A year earlier Bacrot had crushed Smyslov (5-1), but it should not be forgotten that Vasily Vasilievich, being exactly ten years older than Korchnoi, by that time had already switched to the 'veteran regime'. But Korchnoi had as though forgotten about his age, and he continued to battle successfully with the best grandmasters of every generation, ignoring the world senior championship.

True, he played with pleasure in exhibition matches and match-tournaments such as 'Veterans against the strongest women players' or 'Veterans against young talents'. Thus in February 1998, Korchnoi, Spassky, Gligoric and Taimanov played a double-round event with Bacrot, Ponomarev, Nataf and Shaked. In his eight games Korchnoi gained more wins than anyone else (four!), like Spassky he scored 'plus two', and the veterans won overall by 16½-15½.

Then in March 1999 Viktor Lvovich again travelled to St Petersburg and 'finally settled matters' with Spassky, defeating him in a rapidplay match of ten games: 6-4 (+4-2=4).

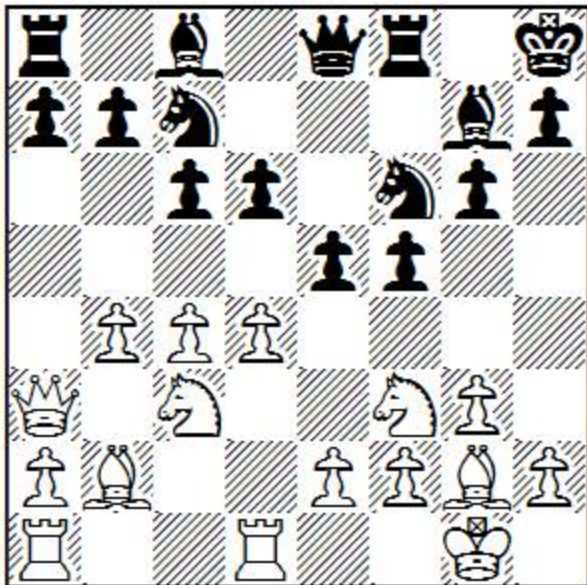
At the turn of the century he took part in three FIDE world championships held on the knock-out system (1997, 1999 and 2001): in the second round in Groningen he lost in a fierce struggle on the tie-break to Short, in Las Vegas he overcame Dolmatov in a tie-break but then went down to Kramnik, and in Moscow, again on a tie-break, he suffered a defeat against Psakhis (incidentally, twice winner of the USSR Championship). The level of Korchnoi's preparation is well illustrated by a game from his mini-match with Sergey Dolmatov, which began with 1 c4. Here is his commentary:

'When preparing for the match, I noticed that Dolmatov relies mainly on the Dutch Defence, in two of its branches: the Stonewall and the Leningrad Variation – set-ups that are very active, but not fashionable, and certainly not 100% sound. A rather strange choice, where I suspect an unusual psychological approach. The majority of grandmasters have developed a scornful attitude to dubious openings. Perhaps subconsciously there exists a desire to punish the impudent opponent as quickly as possible – “How dare he play this opening against me?!” And meanwhile, this opening has been thoroughly analysed in his home laboratory. Disillusionment awaits the grandmaster playing White – using routine methods this so-called dubious opening will not be breached! This psychological context was clear to me, and so I prepared seriously. Even so, I did not manage to find a clear advantage in the Stonewall after 1 d4. This was why I preferred to begin the game with 1 c4, in order to have the option of employing the set-up with the white pawn at d3.'

The game went 1 ... f5 2 Nf3 Nf6 3 g3 d6! (3 ... e6 4 Bg2 Be7 5 0-0 0-0 6 Nc3 d5 7 cxd5 exd5 8 e3 Kh8 9 b3 Nc6 10 Bb2 Be6 11 Ne2 Bg8 12 d3 Qd7 13 a3 Bd6 14 Qc2 Rae8 15 b4 ... 1-0 Kasparov-Short, Paris rapidplay 1990) 4 d4! g6 5 Bg2 Bg7 6 0-0 0-0 7 Nc3, and White reached the main position of the Leningrad Variation, having avoided the 'Stonewall'!

Moreover, after 7 ... c6 Korchnoi sprung a surprise on his opponent that he had specially prepared for the match – 8 Qb3!? (later in the tie-break he even played 7 Qb3) 8 ... Kh8 9 Rd1 Na6 10 Qa3! Qe8 11 b4 Nc7 12 Bb2 e5?

In the given instance this standard reply is a mistake!



13 dxe5 dxe5 14 Qa5! Na6 15 b5 b6 16 Qa3 Nc5 17 bxc6 e4 18 Nd4 Qf7 19 Rac1 Be6 20 Ncb5 a6 21 Nd6 Qc7? (a blunder in a difficult position) 22 Nb7! 1-0. A model example of a psychological opening win.

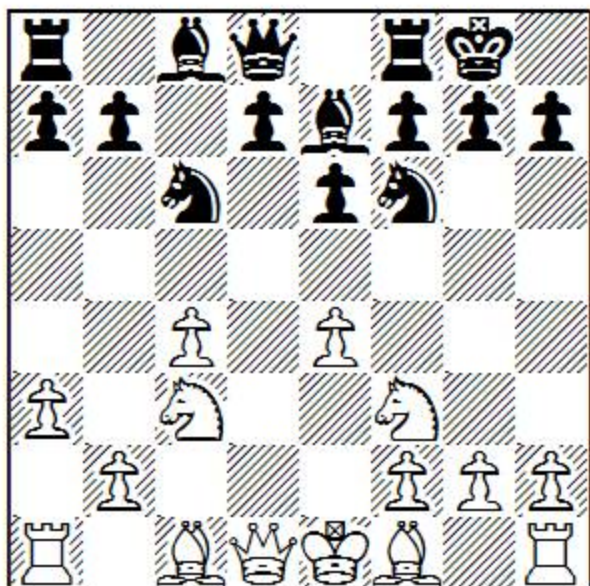
And here is another characteristic comment from his introduction to this game: 'It is hard to find a place on this earth where there is less interest in chess than in Las Vegas – there are enough amusements there without chess! Nevertheless, that was the appointed venue for a major chess event, which influential FIDE officials even called the World Championship.' Typical Korchnoi!

It is staggering that even at the age of 70 he did not reduce his playing activity and the geography of his appearances remained just as broad as before: Olympiads in Istanbul (2000), Bled (2002) and Calva (2004), the traditional tournaments in Wijk aan Zee (2000) and Biel (2001-03), the Stein Memorial in Lvov (2000) and the Najdorf Memorial in Buenos Aires (2001), where, incidentally, he defeated Judit Polgar in a French Defence ...

A notable event was Korchnoi's match with the 17-year-old Ruslan Ponomarev, the future FIDE world champion (Donetsk, January 2001). The age difference between the two players was almost 53 years!

This match of eight games was a very tough one and ended with a score of 4-4 (+2-2=4). Korchnoi's two wins were gained with White in a

well-tested line of the English Opening: 1 c4 c5 2 Nf3 Nf6 3 Nc3 Nc6 4 d4 cxd4 5 Nxd4 e6 6 a3!? (6 Ndb5 – *Game No.37*) 6 ... Be7 7 e4 0-0 8 Nf3



In the 2nd game 8 ... d6 led to a 'hedgehog' (incidentally, not only Korchnoi, but also Karpov liked playing against the 'hedgehog': they were always seeking new ideas): 9 Be2 b6 10 0-0 Bb7 11 Bf4 Rc8 (11 ... Ne5!?) 12 Re1 a6 13 Bf1 Qc7 14 b4 Rfd8 (14 ... Ne5 15 Nd2 Kh8 is more active, then ... Rg8 and ... g7-g5 or ... Nfd7 and ... g7-g5, à la Fischer!) 15 Rc1 Ne5 16 Nd2 Qb8 17 h3 Bc6 18 Qe2 Ng6 19 Bg3 Qb7 20 Nb3 h6 21 Rb1! Bf8 22 f3 Re8 23 Bf2 Qb8 24 Qe3 Nd7 25 Red1 Bb7? 26 Na4!, and on the 117th move(!) Black resigned.

In the final, 8th game Ponomarev played rather more strongly: 8 ... Qc7! 9 Bg5 b6 10 Bd3 h6 11 Bh4 Nh5 12 Bxe7 Nxe7 13 0-0 Ba6 14 Rc1 Nf4 15 Nb5!? (aiming to create a non-standard position; something similar occurred with me in my game with Kramnik, Tilburg 1997) 15 ... Bxb5 16 cxb5 Qd6 17 Bb1 Qxd1 18 Rcx d1 d5 19 e5 g5 20 Rfe1, and after a protracted struggle, not without its mistakes, White nevertheless extracted a win on the 66th move and levelled the score in the match.

These games are of interest primarily for seeing *how* Korchnoi outplayed Ponomarev: by creating unclear positions, full of life, the veteran tired out his young opponent in protracted play, with time-troubles and mutual errors – and in the end the exhausted Ruslan cracked under the tension and made the last mistake! For Ponomarev

the match with Korchnoi became roughly the same excellent schooling as was the match with Reshevsky in 1961 for the 18-year-old Fischer. The young Ukrainian grandmaster grasped the logic of matchplay and made a sharp leap forward. Largely thanks to this invaluable experience, a year later he was able to win the FIDE world championship in Moscow, defeating in mini-matches Morozevich, Bareev and Svidler, and in the final – Ivanchuk (4½-2½).

His opponent also shone after this match, winning a very strong double-round tournament in Biel in the summer of 2001: 1. Korchnoi – 6 out of 10; 2. Svidler – 5½; 3. Gelfand – 5; 4-6. Grischuk, Lautier and Pelletier – 4½. It goes without saying that this was an excellent present for his own 70th birthday (which was also marked in the spring by rapidplay tournaments in St Petersburg and Zurich). In November he added to this a share of 1st place in an open tournament on Curaçao, dedicated to the 40th anniversary of the famous and, for Korchnoi, equally dramatic Candidates tournament (cf. the chapter ‘Drama on Curaçao’).

Incidentally, Karpov likes to count the number of first places that he was taken or shared in various tournaments, including team events and even the most insignificant ones. Here he has passed well over a hundred and he considers himself to be the absolute record holder – and it would appear that this is so (although the picture would be different if only super-tournaments were counted). But if an equally scrupulous count were to be made for Korchnoi – who knows, might he not overtake his historic opponent?

February 2003 found Korchnoi in Reykjavik, where he played successfully in a category 15 tournament: 1. Shirov – 7 out of 9; 2-3. Korchnoi and Macieja – 6; 4-5. McShane and I.Sokolov – 5½; 6. Adams – 5, etc. In finishing so high in the final table, he was helped by a last-round win over his ‘old opponent’, the now 20-year-old Bacrot. I have included this game in the book with the approval of Viktor Lvovich himself.

Game 49

V.Korchnoi-E.Bacrot

Reykjavik 2003

Slav Defence D23

1 c4 Nf6 2 Nf3 c6 3 d4 d5 4 Qc2 (avoiding the main lines of the Slav Defence, where his opponent feels very confident) 4 ... dxc4 5 Qxc4 Bf5

The alternative is 5 ... Bg4 6 Nbd2 Nbd7 7 g3 (Korchnoi-Bareev, Enghien les Bains 2003).

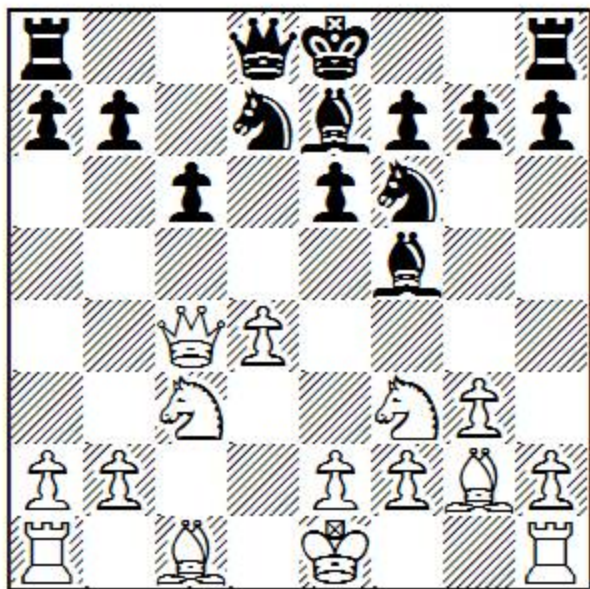
6 g3

Another attempt, made six months later, was not particularly successful: 6 e3 Nbd7 7 Nbd2!? (7 Bd3 Bxd3 8 Qxd3 e5 with equality, Korchnoi-Godena, Switzerland 1999) 7 ... Qc7 8 Qb3 h6 9 Nc4 e6 10 Bd3 Bxd3 11 Qxd3 c5, and Black gained a draw (Korchnoi-Bacrot, Biel 2003).

6 ... e6 7 Bg2 Nbd7 8 Nc3

Three months later, against Motylev in the Russian Team Championship (Tolyatti 2003), Korchnoi tried 8 0-0 Be7 9 Qb3 Qb6 10 Nbd2 0-0 11 Nc4, but after 11 ... Qa6!? 12 Bf4 Nb6 13 Nfe5 (a novelty – however, it does not change the evaluation of the position) 13 ... Rfd8 14 Rfd1 Be4 Black maintained the balance.

8 ... Be7



9 Qb3

A rare move, which at least creates some problems by the attack on the b7-pawn. The position after 9 0-0 0-0 had already occurred with the young Frenchman, and he was ready for both the sluggish 10 e3

(Mednis-Bacrot, 4th matchgame, Cannes 1996), and the questionable 10 Nh4 Nb6 11 Qb3 Qxd4 (Rogers-Bacrot, Batumi rapidplay 2001).

9 ... Qb6 (9 ... Nb6 would have diverted the knight from the key e5-square) 10 Nd2 Bg6

On encountering an unfamiliar plan, Bacrot makes a cautious prophylactic move, although the simple 10 ... 0-0 would have given Black a normal game: 11 e4 Bg6 12 Nc4 Qxb3 13 axb3 Bb4 14 f3 c5, or 11 Nc4 Qxb3 12 axb3 Bb4 13 Bf4 a5 $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ (Goldin-Dreev, Novosibirsk 1989).

11 Nc4 Qxb3

11 ... Qa6!? came into consideration. By exchanging queens, Black steps into his opponent's territory: the playing of complicated endings with prospects of an initiative has for a long time been Korchnoi's forte!

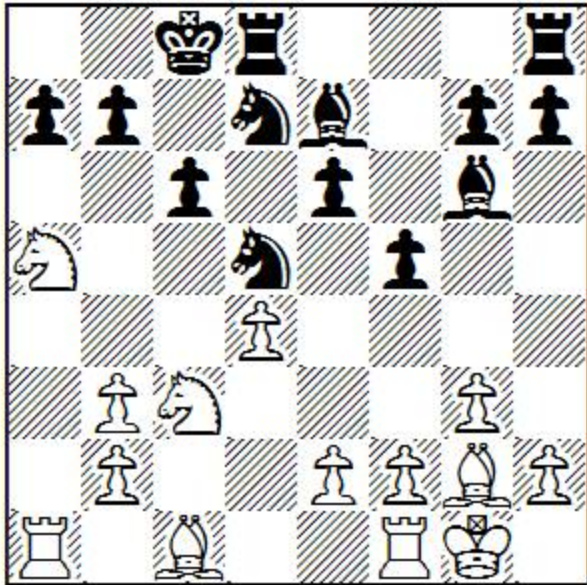
12 axb3 Nd5 13 0-0 f5?!

Bacrot makes a move on general, positional grounds, supporting his knight at d5 and planning counterplay against the doubled b-pawns. But Korchnoi, as we will now see, also takes into account the dynamic factors of the position, transforming his weaknesses into a strength!

13 ... N7b6? 14 Nxd5 Nxd5 15 Bxd5 cxd5 16 Nb6! was clearly bad for Black. However, after 13 ... 0-0 (Khuzman) he would have had every chance of equalising, for example: 14 Na5 Rfb8 15 e4 Nb4 16 Bf4 e5! 17 dxe5 (17 Bxe5 Nxe5 18 dxe5 Nd3) 17 ... Nc5 18 Nc4 Nxb3 19 Rad1 Nc5 etc.

14 Na5 0-0-0

This all appears very logical ...



15 Bxd5!

An unpleasant surprise: White suddenly begins an attack on the king! Gufeld once said that at the board it is psychologically difficult to consider variations with the exchange of a bishop for a knight, and the threat of such an exchange is often underestimated. In the given instance Korchnoi exploits the concrete features of the position – the ‘holes’ around the black king. It is important for White to retain his knight at c3, in order to threaten Nb5.

15 ... exd5 (15 ... cxd5? 16 Bf4) 16 Bf4 (with the threat of Nxd5) 16 ... Nb8?!

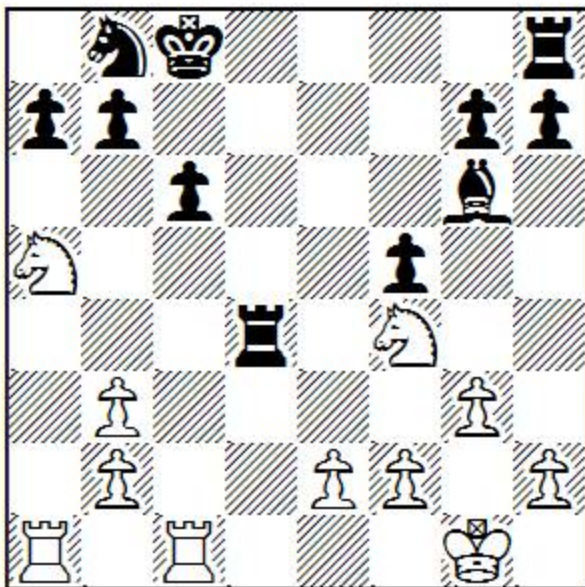
A passive reply with the hope of beating off the first wave of the attack and holding out in the endgame. It looks dangerous to play 16 ... Nb6 (16 ... Bf7? 17 Nxc6! bxc6 18 Rxa7 Rde8 19 Rfa1 and wins) 17 Rfc1 Bd6?! 18 Bxd6 Rxd6 19 Nb5 Re6 20 Nxa7+ Kb8 21 N5xc6+ bxc6 22 Nxc6+ (Khuzman), with three pawns for the piece and a continuing attack, or 17 ... Rd7?! 18 Nb5 Kd8 19 Nxa7 Ke8 20 b4 with an extra pawn and a powerful initiative (20 ... Bxb4? 21 N5xc6!).

17 ... a6! is the only way of defending. Now nothing is given by 18 b4 Bxb4 19 Nxc6 bxc6 20 Na2 Bf8 21 Rxc6+ Kb7 22 Rc7+ Kb8 23 Nc3 Bd6 24 Rc6 (Khuzman) in view of 24 ... Nc8! First 18 Be5! is stronger, and if 18 ... Rhg8, then now 19 b4! Bxb4 20 Nxc6! bxc6 21 Na2 Ba5 (not 21 ... Bf8? 22 Rxc6+ Kb7 23 Rc7+ Kb8 24 Rxc7+, or 21

... Bd2? 22 Rxc6+ Kb7 23 Rc7+ Ka8 24 Nb4 with crushing threats) 22 Rxc6+ Kd7 23 Rd6+ Ke7 24 Rxd8 Rxd8 25 b4, regaining the piece with an obvious advantage. 19 ... Bg5 is also no better: 20 f4 Bf6 21 b5 axb5 22 Nxb5 Rd7 23 Na7+ Kd8 24 N5xc6+! bxc6 25 Rxc6 Rb7 26 Ra6 and wins.

Therefore 18 ... Bg5!? (instead of 18 ... Rhg8) is stronger: 19 f4 (19 e3 Nd7) 19 ... Bf6, and although after 20 b4 White retains the initiative, Black has chances of resisting.

17 Rfc1 Bd6 (the terrible white bishop must be urgently neutralised) 18 Nxd5 Bxf4 19 Nxf4 Rxd4



20 Nc4! (Korchnoi demonstrates his tactical sharpness) 20 ... Bf7

Bacrot decides to give up a pawn. 20 ... a6? is not possible in view of 21 Ne6! with the threats of Nxd4 and Nb6 mate! If 20 ... Na6, then 21 e3 Rdd8 22 Nxg6 hxg6 23 Ne5 (an ultra-powerful knight!) 23 ... Rd2 24 Nxc6! (Khuzman). Material equality would have been retained by 20 ... b5!? 21 Ne6 Rd7 22 Ne5 Rd6, but after 23 Nc5 Re8 24 f4 Re7 25 Rd1 White has an overwhelming advantage.

21 Rxa7

Thus, the position has clarified: White is a pawn up with an active position, and Black faces a difficult struggle for a draw. He does not in fact succeed in organising play against the weak b2- and b3-pawns.

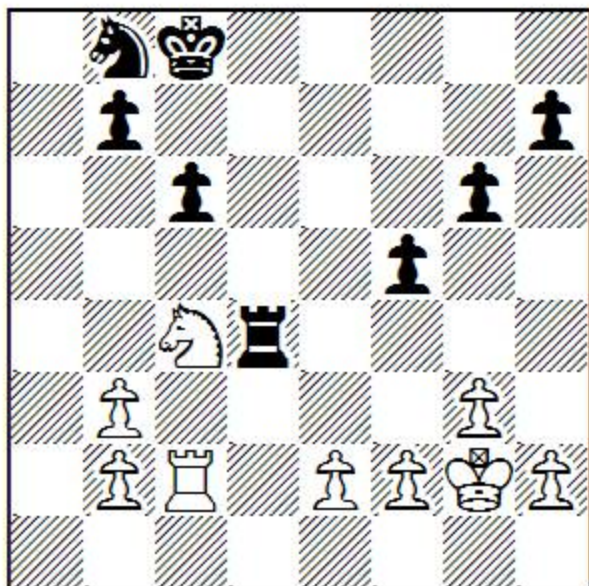
21 ... Bxc4 (if 21 ... Re8, then 22 e3 Rdd8 23 h4 is good – Khuzman)
 22 Rxc4! (more accurate than 22 bxc4 Rd2) 22 ... Rd1+ 23 Kg2 Re8

Only White benefits from 23 ... g5 24 Ne6 Re8 (24 ... h6 25 Nc5) 25 Nxg5 Rxe2 26 Nxh7 and Rf4, winning.

24 Rc2 (24 h4!? Khuzman) 24 ... Kc7?!

24 ... Na6 was more tenacious, immediately forcing the exchange of rooks – 25 Ra8+ Kd7 26 Rxe8 Kxe8, and after 27 Nd3 there arises a slightly more favourable version for Black of the ending that is reached in the game by move 30.

25 Ra5 g6 26 Nd5+! Kc8 (or 26 ... Kd6 27 Nc3! Rd4 28 Ra4 Rxa4 29 bxa4) 27 Ne3 Rd4 28 Ra4 Red8 29 Rxd4 Rxd4 30 Nc4



30 ... Rd1?

This avoidance of the knight endgame conclusively ruins Black's chances. Although, in the event of 30 ... Na6 31 Rd2 Rxd2 32 Nxd2 Nb4 33 Kf3 Kd7 34 Kf4 (Khuzman) White would also have gradually won.

31 Rd2 Rb1 32 b4 (solving the problem of the doubled pawns) 32 ... b5

After 32 ... Kc7 33 b5 cxb5 34 Na3 or 32 ... Na6 33 b5 cxb5 34 Nd6+ Kc7 35 Nxb5+ Kc6 36 Nc3+ (Khuzman) Black's last semblances of counterplay would have disappeared.

33 Ne5

Apart from an extra pawn, White also has total domination. The fall of the black kingside pawns and the march to the queening square of the white h-pawn are practically inevitable.

33 ... Kc7 34 h4 Kb6 (or 34 ... Na6 35 Rd7+ Kb6 36 Nd3) 35 Kf3 Na6 36 Nd7+ Kc7 37 Nf8 Nxb4 38 Nxh7 Nd5 39 Nf8 Nb6 40 Nxg6 Nc4 41 Rc2 Nxb2 42 Ne5 b4 43 Rxc6+ Kb7 44 h5 1-0

In May 2003 an entertaining internet match – a sign of the times! – was held between teams from St Petersburg (Khalifman, Svidler, Korchnoi and Sakaev) and NAO from Paris, the leading club in Europe (Kramnik, Radjabov, Fressinet and Karjakin). Three games ended in draws, but Korchnoi won against Fressinet and brought victory to his native city.

The list of his appearances in 2003-5 remained almost equally as intensive as before. Korchnoi greeted the New Year 2005 at a tournament in Drammen in Norway, where he defeated the 14-year-old Magnus Carlsen – at that moment the youngest grandmaster in history. The difference in age between them was 59 years! Only with Smyslov was there a greater difference (62), when he played Bacrot.

Also phenomenal is the gap in the dates of birth of opponents against whom Korchnoi has played serious games: from Levenfish (1889) to Carlsen (1990), i.e. 101 years! Only Smyslov has more: from Duz-Khotimirsky (1881) to Bacrot (1983). However, at 'Smyslov's age' Korchnoi is achieving higher results and for the moment he is obviously not intending to stop at what he has achieved. Thus at the Geller Memorial (Odessa, July 2005) he was battling at rapidplay chess with the 12-year-old Ukrainian Stanislav Bogdanovich ...

What is the secret of Korchnoi's unique chess longevity? Whereas the prolonging of Smyslov's career was helped by his innate sense of harmony and incredible intuition, back in Soviet times Korchnoi had qualities ascribed to him, which were supposedly typical of Botvinnik: it was said that for success you must without fail develop in yourself a hostility towards your opponent, and enter into a conflict which will unsettle him and raise your own fighting spirit. However, life has shown that this is far from the truth. Yes, Korchnoi has a difficult character (but who has an easy one?). Everyone knows his acrimonious, biting comments, which normally precisely hit their target. Of course, over the past half century he has many times experienced strong hostility, but this can hardly be the leitmotif of such a long and brilliant career.

It seems to me that, apart from enormous talent, it is also a question of Korchnoi's selfless love for chess and his supreme professionalism. All his life he has been tirelessly relearning, and working on the improvement of his style. Spassky rightly considers Korchnoi to be an 'extraordinary hard worker' and says with a smile: 'When he lived in the USSR, I called him a hero of socialist labour, but when he moved to the West I awarded him the title of hero of capitalist labour!'

The key to understanding the Korchnoi phenomenon can be found in the annotations to his own games. What mercilessness with respect to himself, what forceful, objective evaluations! It is this ultra-critical approach to chess problems, developed from his youth, that enables Korchnoi to retain his clarity of thinking and to continue developing. In combination with robust health, this is the basis for chess longevity.

I should like to conclude this chapter about Viktor Korchnoi with some wonderful words by his former second and compatriot, grandmaster Genna Sosonko:

'Once, after he had found a new idea as a result of lengthy analysis, I advised him not to employ it in a tournament that seemed to me less significant, but to keep it for some more important event. "For another tournament I'll think up something new," replied Viktor, "I don't store up novelties."

'As a rule, Korchnoi's opening finds are not simply a move or a manoeuvre, strengthening a variation or refuting a generally-accepted evaluation. In the majority of cases it is a question of a whole complex of ideas, a new conception in a particular defence or system. And although he has not given his name to any openings, Korchnoi's creations have given an impulse to the development of many of them for decades. His interpretation of positions from the French Defence, when the presence of an isolated pawn is more than compensated by good piece play, the Tartakower Variation in the Queen's Gambit, the Open Variation of the Spanish, which was considered not fully satisfactory after the 1948 match-tournament and was revived by Korchnoi at the very highest level, including matches for the world championship, forced the evaluation of many opening set-ups to be reviewed. He devised and introduced a paradoxical knight sortie on the 4th move, which started a whole new branch in the English Opening (1 c4 e5 2 Nc3 Nf6 3 Nf3 Nc6 4 g3 Nd4!?). The variation of the Grünfeld Defence, which today is considered the main one in this opening and has caused Black a mass of problems (1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 d5 4

cx d5 Nxd5 5 e4 Nxc3 6 bxc3 Bg7 7 Nf3), was first properly employed by Korchnoi. Many variations of the King's Indian – an opening which he considers very difficult for Black, and in the depths of his heart even dubious, are inconceivable in modern theory without the name of Korchnoi.'

Chapter Two

Anatoly the Twelfth

God-Given Talent

At the turn of the 1960s-1970s, when alarm was growing in the USSR about the lack of new world stars, there finally appeared an amazing young talent on the chess stage – Anatoly Evgenyevich Karpov (born 23 May 1951). His deep, infiltrating style, subtle positional feeling, and extraordinary persistence, practicality and flexibility rapidly raised him to the very summit of chess. It would appear that in 1975 Fischer was the first to clearly discern all these qualities in Karpov, and he realised that such an opponent might prove too tough for him.

Karpov's play was always distinguished by its exceptionally high degree of efficiency. In contrast to Korchnoi or me, Karpov was not a researcher in the openings and he did not work so much on chess, but he was very skilful at selecting and absorbing new ideas, and then making brilliant use of them in practice. How many points, especially with White, did he gather literally out of nothing! An ability to quickly grasp trends of chess development, which at one time also distinguished Lasker, helped Karpov to find his place in the changing conditions of the late 20th century.

The glorious chess career of the 12th world champion can be arbitrarily divided into four periods – the four phases of his creative strength, which constitute the greatest interest as regards his contribution to chess:

1. 1968-75. A time of rapid creative growth and the forming of his style, when the basis of his classical understanding of chess was laid. Here a very great role was played by Karpov's permanent trainer – grandmaster Semion Furman. The peak of this very important period was his Candidates semi-final match with Spassky (1974).

2. 1975-85. The time when Karpov held the champion's title. A slowing of creative growth: he is evidently 'oppressed' by the unplayed match with Fischer. Initially Karpov reaps the fruits of his great

preceding work, and this is quite sufficient to silence talk of him being a 'paper champion'. The very difficult match with Korchnoi (1978) forces Karpov to seek reserves of improvement in his game. And in the early 1980s he climbs to a new level. The peak of this period is our first match (1984/85). The most difficult experience in his career: he does not win this match, after leading 5-0 – and he loses our second match (1985).

3. 1986-90. The time of Karpov's 'second wind'. Demonstrating phenomenal willpower, he finds the strength to play a return match (1986) and to complete a resolute rebuilding of his opening repertoire – giving up his favourite move 1 e4, and so on. I think that this was our best match and one of the best matches in the history of chess. After losing it, Karpov nevertheless makes a new surge: he brilliantly wins the super-final Candidates match against Andrey Sokolov (the peak of this period!) and almost wins our fourth match (1987). Even the loss of the decisive 24th game does not unsettle him: he shares victory with me in the USSR Championship (1988), plays excellently in the World Cup super-tournaments (1988/89), wins the next Candidates cycle and battles highly tenaciously in our fifth match (1990).

4. 1991-98. Losing hope of regaining the crown, he experiences dejection and disillusionment: a difficult Candidates match with Anand (1991) and defeat against Short (1992). But after I leave FIDE, Karpov begins a new surge. He wins a match against Timman and becomes FIDE world champion (1993), plays the 'tournament of his life' (Linares 1994) and confidently defeats Gata Kamsky in a match (1996) – the peak of this period! And its ending – a further match with Anand (1998), Karpov's 'swansong' in his many years of fighting for the world championship.

It is in accordance with these periods that I have arranged my description of the career of the last of my great predecessors.

'A serious Boy!'

Karpov was born into and grew up in the family of a factory foreman, in the small town of Zlatoust in the Urals, not far from Chelyabinsk. They were poor – like millions of working-class families in the post-war period. Tolya learned chess at the age of four, by watching the play of his father, who then taught his son the rules. But in contrast to the parents of Capablanca and Reshevsky, he did not lose the first games to his son, but won all of them, without exception (this was, after

all, the Soviet chess school!). 'I was ready to burst into tears,' Karpov remembers in the book *Chess is my Life*, written with co-author Alexander Roshal, 'and I would have done, had it not been for my father's words: "Someone has to lose, and if you start crying I won't play with you at all." Perhaps it was then that I subconsciously, intuitively began to grasp a very important piece of chess wisdom: the threat is stronger than the execution ...'

At the age of seven he went along to the chess section of the metallurgical factory sports club, in his very first tournament he fulfilled the 3rd category norm, and after two years of enthusiastic battles he also achieved 1st category. At that time the idol of the youngsters was the young Tal and chess was experiencing a burst of popularity. Tolya's first chess books were Panov's books *Course in the Openings* and *Capablanca*. By studying the selected games of the great Cuban, he sharply improved his playing strength and his understanding of the game. He was also taken under the wing of the well-known Chelyabinsk trainer and teacher Leonid Gratvol (who also developed the future grandmasters Timoshchenko, Sveshnikov and Panchenko). At the age of 10 Karpov was already adult champion of the town and a participant in the adult championship of the region. When he was 12, being the youngest candidate master in the country, he travelled to Moscow, to a session of the recently formed Botvinnik School.

Initially the play of the puny boy from the Urals did not make any particular impression on Botvinnik. Karpov: 'His remarks regarding my completely feeble handling of the opening had their effect: I began reading chess literature. The favourite at that period of the school was considered to be Yuri Balashov – the future grandmaster, friend and helper of Karpov. But when Botvinnik, who was passing through Zlatoust, met Tolya's parents and visited them, he passed the verdict: 'A good family and a serious boy!' And in the second half of the 1960s he was already predicting a great future for him.

Soon the Karpov family moved to Tula, where his father took up the post of chief engineer at a factory. In those years competitions with the master norm were much rarer than today. Tolya took his chance at the first opportunity – in a tournament 'masters against candidates' (Leningrad, summer 1966), where he was seconded by the Tula master Anatoly Matsukevich. In exceeding the norm by two points (+5=10), Karpov gained memorable wins over the experienced Chistyakov and Ravinsky, and also made the acquaintance of Igor

Zaitsev – an outstanding analyst, together with whom he later went through seven matches for the world championship (and with whom that summer he played an amusing drawn miniature – cf. *Volume 4, Game No.48*, note to White's 6th move).

The first foreign tournament in his life was in Trinec in Czechoslovakia (1966/67): 1. Karpov – 11 out of 13 (+9=4); 2-3. Kupka and Kupreichik – 9½; 4. Smejkal – 9, etc. In the process the 15-year-old master defeated his main rivals – the 20-year-old Jan Smejkal and the 17-year-old Viktor Kupreichik.

Karpov also greeted the next new year abroad – in Groningen in the Netherlands, where the Niemeijer Cup took place, effectively the European Junior Championship. It is significant that Karpov's first move was made by the honoured guest, Dr Euwe: at the young player's command, the ex-world champion played e2-e4. The battle took place in two stages: a semi-final (seven-round Swiss system) and a final (all-play-all) tournament of eight. Tolya conducted the semi-final stage with enviable pragmatism: after two wins at the start he made five draws and, by sharing 2nd-6th places, qualified for the final (in passing, winning a blitz tournament, which was held on the only free day – 13½ out of 16). Here his rivals were Jan Timman and Andras Adorjan. Karpov started with 2½ out of 3, but Timman scored half a point more! A win over the Dutchman in round 4 decided the outcome of the tournament. The Soviet player then won one more game and took first place with 5½ out of 7 (+4=3).

Botvinnik remarked with satisfaction on the ease of this victory and gave an accurate description of Karpov: 'A clever competitor, he always knows when to play for a win, and when he should make a quick draw. In western chess circles he was even criticised for the series of short draws in the Groningen tournament. In itself, of course, this was not very good, but it is surprising and worthy of recognition that a 16-year-old master should be able to adopt competitive tactics, characteristic of a mature grandmaster.'

In the summer of 1968 Tolya finished secondary school with a gold medal and entered the Mechanics and Mathematics Faculty of Moscow University. And here he easily won the University Championship – 10 out of 13 (+7=6). On arriving that autumn at a training session for the Armed Forces team before the USSR Team Cup, he met the trainer of the army players, the Leningrad grandmaster Semion Furman. That was a truly historic meeting!

Furman later remembered: 'Karpov was enlisted into the team to play on the first junior board. He was a thin, pale-faced youth, rather phlegmatic in appearance. It also appeared that he had difficulty in moving the chess pieces. Was such a player really capable of great competitive achievements?' Here Roshal quotes a joke by Gufeld, who was also seeing Tolya for the first time: 'This boy will never be a grandmaster – he is too light.' But this did not concern Furman: 'Yes, nature did not endow Karpov with a powerful physique – but on the other hand it bestowed on him a rare chess talent and strength of spirit. As well as industriousness and modesty. When I began working with Karpov, I immediately realised that he was a very capable player with a big future.'

This was already shown by the USSR Team Cup (Riga, December 1968), where the young master scored 10 out of 11 (+9=2). From then on he constantly improved all parts of his game, especially the opening. Furman, an outstanding expert on theory, had the following motto: 'The opponents must be surrounded by novelties, like a wolf surrounded by red flags when it is being hunted.' And he and Karpov surrounded them! For convenience of working, a year later Tolya moved to Leningrad and transferred to the Economics Faculty of Leningrad University. Chess became the main thing in his life.

Soon he confidently won a six-round qualifying tournament of the three best juniors in the country (Leningrad, spring 1969), and then also the World Junior Championship (Stockholm, August 1969). The only difficulties he had were in the semi-final (he nearly lost to Hug and Torre), but in the final he was irrepressible. His 3rd round encounter with the Swede Ulf Andersson was especially important – Tolya literally suffocated the opponent in his favourite Ruy Lopez. The result: 1. Karpov – 10 out of 11 (+9=2); 2-3. Adorjan and Urzica – 7; 4. Kaplan – 6½; 5. Andersson – 6, etc. The first victory, and a brilliant one, by a Soviet player in the world junior championships since Spassky's success in 1955!

Although by the age of 18 he had achieved a very high standard of play and had become an international master, Karpov had not yet played a single serious game with a grandmaster – a paradox of that era, when tournaments with a grandmaster norm were a rarity. With a different tempo of life, he might already have been in contention for a place in the 'Match of the Century' (Belgrade, spring 1970).

In the early 1970s Anatoly gradually made up for lost time. The first step was an unequivocal win in the Russian Federation Championship (Kuybyshev, May-June 1970), which had the status of a USSR Championship semi-final: 1. Karpov – 12½ out of 17 (+8=9); 2. Krogius – 11; 3-4. Antoshin and Dementiev – 10½; behind them came A.Zaitsev, Rashkovsky, Tseshkovsky etc.

Then he flew together with Leonid Stein to distant Venezuela, where he finally played in a prestigious international tournament (Caracas, summer 1970). At the start Karpov became the sole leader – 6 out of 7! And, by his own admission, he was already cherishing the most ambitious hopes ... When suddenly he was defeated by Ivkov (after declining the offer of a draw), he almost lost to Panno, and he went down against Kavalek. 'Here it is, the dangerous feeling of the goal being close!' However, after composing himself, he nevertheless achieved the grandmaster norm: 1. Kavalek – 13 out of 17; 2-3. Ivkov and Stein – 12; 4-6. Benko, Karpov and Panno – 11½, etc.

Making his debut in the 38th USSR Championship (Riga, November-December 1970), he immediately established himself among the leading players in the country: 1. Korchnoi – 16 out of 21; 2. Tukmakov – 14½; 3. Stein – 14; 4. Balashov – 12½; 5-7. Gipslis, Karpov and Savon – 12, etc. But more had been expected of him. He was criticised for his over-cautious play – 14 draws! Tal thinks that the youth 'was still too respectful towards his senior opponents, and had not managed to rid himself of his timidity towards them.' Furman answers for his protégé: 'In his position now it is hard to experiment. He is obliged to achieve a good result, to ensure himself competitive success. So he has to restrain his emotions, his creative impulses, and play rather dryly.'

The following year, in association with Furman, Karpov continued his steady ascent to the heights of chess mastery. After winning a USSR Championship semi-final (+9=8), there followed a worthy performance in the very strong 39th USSR Championship (Leningrad, September-October 1971): 1. Savon – 15 out of 21; 2-3. Smyslov and Tal – 13½; 4. Karpov – 13 (+7-2=12), etc. However, he was dissatisfied with his play and complained of ill luck: blunders in his games with Vaganian and Smyslov (*Volume 2, Game No.117*), a squandered overwhelming advantage against Savon (in his time-trouble!) and so on. 'No one "made me a present" of even half a point in this tournament, whereas I gave many away.'

Despite tiredness (he had been playing for the entire second half of the year), Anatoly did not miss an opportunity to test himself in a rare super-tournament of 18 grandmasters – the Alekhine Memorial (Moscow, November-December 1971). ‘At the opening ceremony Anatoly couldn’t manage to unscrew the head of the souvenir doll in which his tournament number was concealed, and some wit among the spectators exclaimed: “He isn’t very strong ... How’s he going to last out in such a tournament?” In the first few days of [this event] there were too many short and colourless draws, but closer to the finish the battle became sharper. Our “young rationalist”, as Karpov was sometimes called, also had to change tactics. At that point he had scored nine draws and only one win – over the Hungarian Lengyel.’ (Roshal)

In the 8th round he drew with the world champion Spassky, in the 9th with Tal, and in the 10th with Petrosian. ‘And here I decided: it’s all or nothing!’ recalls Karpov. ‘It was not possible to go on marking time – the opponents to come were very difficult. And in the next round I was, after all, playing White. And this game, in which I defeated Vlastimil Hort, which was a success in both the competitive, and the creative sense, became the turning point for me in the tournament.’ Hort was then one of the strongest players in the world (in the ‘Match of the Century’ he had defeated Polugayevsky on board four), he was ahead of Karpov in the rating list, and at the time of their meeting he was also on ‘plus one’.

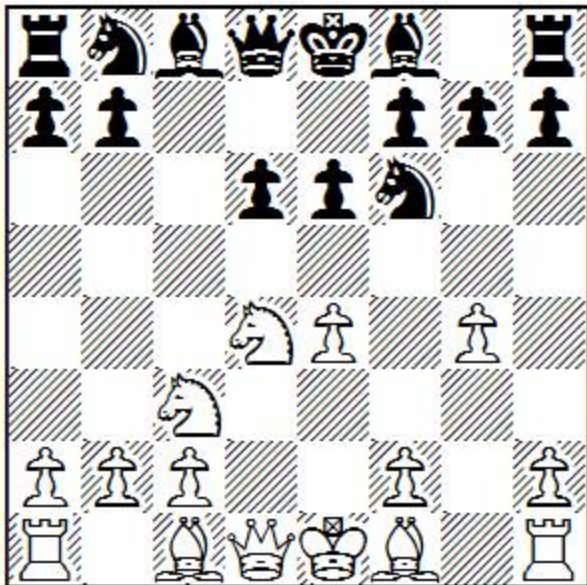
Game 50

A.Karpov-V.Hort

Alekhine Memorial Tournament, Moscow 1971, 11th round

Sicilian Defence B81

1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Nf6 5 Nc3 e6 6 g4!?



Karpov won several pretty and instructive games (given in this book) with the Keres Attack, but from the early 1980s he also had some setbacks here, as well as draws, as in the 1st game of our first match (1984/85), where Black did not experience any opening problems.

6 ... Nc6 (6 ... h6 – *Game Nos.83 and 89*) 7 g5 Nd7 8 Be3 a6

With the idea of ... Qc7 or ... Nxd4 and ... b7-b5. Later this move, which for the moment is not essential, began to be deferred in favour of 8 ... Be7 9 h4 0-0, after which White can choose 10 Qd2, 10 Qe2, or the most energetic move 10 Qh5 (Sax-Polugayevsky, Haninge 1989).

9 f4

Years later Karpov wrote that now he would have preferred 9 Rg1. I tried attacking in this way myself, but after 9 ... Be7 10 h4 0-0 11 h5?! Nde5 12 Nxc6 Nxc6 13 f4 b5 14 Qf3 Bb7 15 Bd3 Nb4! I did not obtain anything from the opening (Kasparov-Polugayevsky, Moscow 1979).

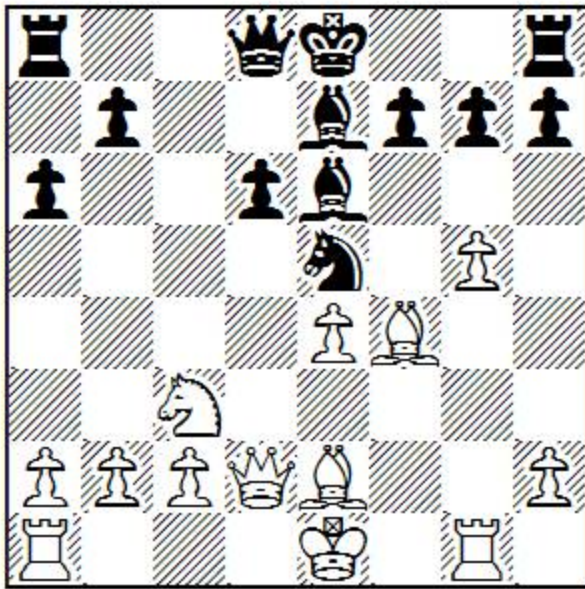
10 Qh5 0-0 11 0-0-0 Re8 12 Rg3 (12 f4!?) is better, as in the games R.Byrne-Spassky (Bugojno 1978) and Van Riemsdijk-Najdorf (Sao Paulo 1978). Or immediately 9 h4, and if 9 ... Be7 (9 ... Qc7) – 10 Qh5, 10 Qd2, or, as played by Karpov, 10 Qe2 (*Game No.71*).

9 ... Be7

'If 9 ... h6 my opponent was probably afraid of the move I was intending to make – 10 Nxe6. Immense complications could then have

arisen: 10 ... fxe6 11 Qh5+ Ke7 12 Bh3 (12 Bc4 and 12 e5, which have been tried, are also parried by 12 ... Qe8! – G.K.) 12 ... Qe8 13 Qh4 with consequences that are difficult to assess. It was precisely this that my tournament position demanded.’ (Karpov). After 13 ... Kd8! and ... Kc7 White would still have had to demonstrate that his attack was worth the sacrificed piece.

10 Rg1 Nxd4 (10 ... 0-0!?) 11 Qxd4 e5 12 Qd2 exf4 13 Bxf4 Ne5 14 Be2 Be6 14 ... Qa5 was bad: 15 Nd5 (Karpov) 15 ... Qxd2+ 16 Bxd2 Rb8 (16 ... Bd8 17 Bb4!) 17 0-0-0, and Black comes under a typical bind.



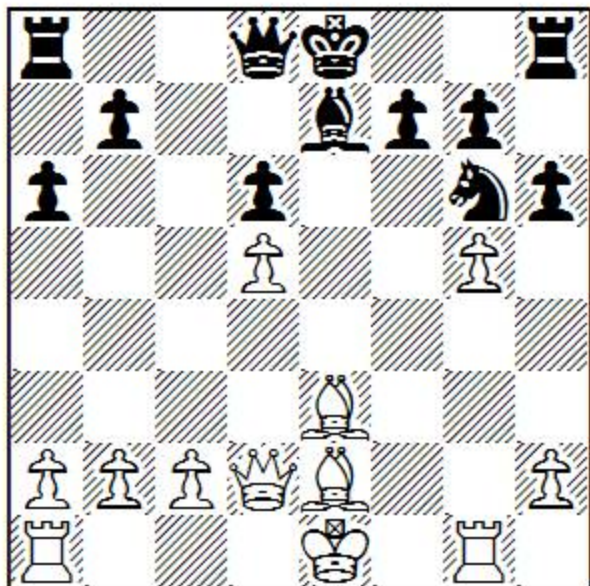
15 Nd5!?

‘Immediately! Otherwise the enemy queen takes up an active position (15 0-0-0 Qa5!).’ (Karpov). True, after 16 Kb1! Rc8 (16 ... 0-0? 17 Nd5) 17 Nd5 Qxd2 18 Rxd2 White also has the better prospects.

15 ... Bxd5 16 exd5

‘Normally one tries to occupy the blockading square with a piece,’ writes Karpov, acknowledging that 16 Qxd5 ‘would have left me with an advantage, since Black’s d-pawn would need to be defended all the time’ (for example, 16 ... Qb6 17 0-0-0 0-0 18 Rgf1 etc.), and he explains his choice: ‘But then my e-pawn would in some instances also have required guarding, which could have cramped my light-squared bishop. Now, however, this bishop is unrestricted in its movements, especially since its black opposite number has already left the board.’

16 ... Ng6 (16 ... 0-0 17 0-0-0 would have condemned Black to passive defence) 17 Be3 h6!



An original move, sharply complicating the situation – ‘risky for both sides!’ At the cost of a pawn Black detains the enemy king in the centre and delays the mobilisation of the white army. However, as long as the centre is closed, it is not apparent how to get at the white king, and Black has just as many problems with his mobilisation.

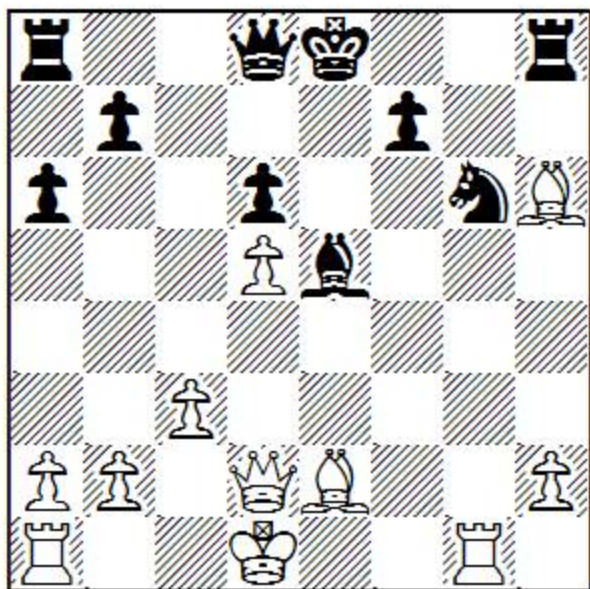
18 gxh6 Bh4+ 19 Kd1 gxh6 20 Bxh6 Bf6?!

By inventive play Black has almost equalised, but the tempting idea of playing his bishop to e5 becomes the cause of new difficulties. This square would be better occupied by the knight, which now remains out of play. And the bishop, by remaining at h4, would have prevented the rook from occupying e1, and White would have had to spend time on evacuating his king to safety.

Therefore 20 ... Qe7! was correct with the intention of ... 0-0-0, for example: 21 Bg7 (21 Bg4 is parried by 21 ... Ne5!) 21 ... Rh7 22 Bd4 Bf6 (now this is quite appropriate, since Black sets up an active defence, where even the rook at h7 will be useful) 23 Bxf6 Qxf6 24 Kc1 0-0-0 with equality, or 23 Re1 Be5! 24 Bg4 Rxh2 25 Qxh2 Bxh2 26 Rxe7+ Kxe7 27 Kd2 Bf4+ with a drawn ending.

21 c3 Be5?!

Again 21 ... Qe7! was better, with the same idea of 22 Bg4 Ne5!, and if 23 Kc2 (no benefit is gained by 23 h3 Nc4! or 23 Re1 Bh4 24 Re2 Rg8), then 23 ... Rxh6! 24 Qxh6 Nxc4 25 Rxc4 Qe2+ 26 Kb3 Qb5+ 27 Rb4 (27 Ka3 Qc5+) 27 ... Qxd5+ 28 Ka4 a5! with a dangerous counterattack. 22 Bh5 is possible (in order after 22 ... Ne5 to calmly reply 23 Kc2), but here Black sacrifices a second pawn – 22 ... 0-0-0! 23 Bxc6 fxc6 24 Rxc6, and after 24 ... Rdg8 25 Rxc8 Rxc8 26 Kc2 Qe4+ 27 Qd3 Rg2+ 28 Bd2 Qa4+! 29 b3 Qh4 it is hard for White to convert his material advantage.



22 Rg4!

‘A multi-purpose move!’ (Dvoretsky). For the moment the h2-pawn does not concern Karpov – it is more important not to allow the activation of the black queen. After 22 Kc2?! Qh4! 23 Be3 Qe4+! 24 Bd3 Qa4+ 25 b3 Qa5 vulnerable points would have appeared in White’s position, and in defending them he would lose his advantage.

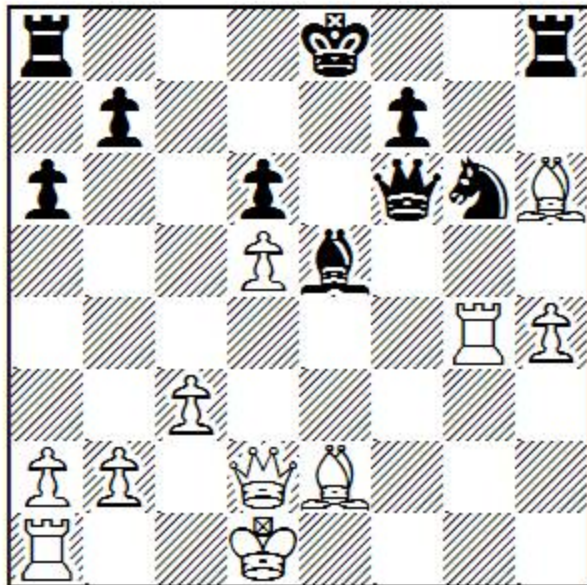
‘After 22 Bg5 Qb6 23 Be3 Qc7 I would not have achieved much at all,’ thinks Karpov. But 23 Kc2! (23 Rg2!? Dvoretsky) is more energetic: 23 ... Rxh2 24 Rh1 Qf2 25 Rxh2 Qxh2 26 Rf1 with dangerous pressure. This looks no worse than the continuation in the game, but it leads to a more clarified position where, from the practical point of view, it is easier for Black to defend (26 ... Kf8, ... Re8 etc.).

22 ... Qf6!

'22 ... Bxh2 was comparatively best, re-establishing material equality.' (Karpov). But after 23 Kc2 Black has a difficult position: '23 ... Ne5? leads to the loss of a piece – 24 Rg2 (24 ... Qh4 25 Rxh2 Qxh2 26 Bb5+), while if 23 ... Qd7, then 24 Rf1 is strong' (Dvoretsky), or 24 Re4+! Ne5 (24 ... Be5 25 Bg4 f5 26 Qg5! Ne7 27 Bh5+ Kd8 28 Rxe5! dxe5 29 d6 with crushing threats) 25 Rh1 Qf5 26 Bd3 with a powerful attack, or if 23 ... Be5, then 24 Rf1 Qd7 25 Re4 etc.

23 h4!

'Black was hoping for 23 Kc2? Ne7! 24 Be3 Rxh2 or 24 Bg5 Qf5+. But now neither 23 ... 0-0-0 nor 23 ... Nxh4 is possible on account of 24 Bg5.' (Dvoretsky)



23 ... Qf5!

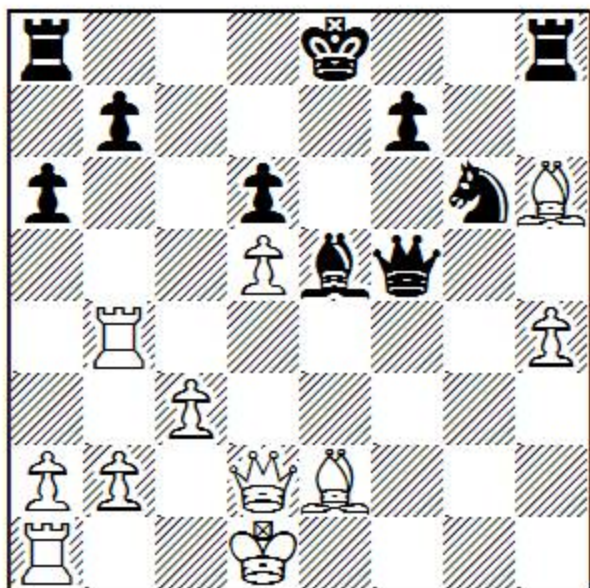
The queen has nevertheless broken free, and it turns out that the opponent's attacking pieces themselves require defence. The white queen is literally torn in two: it has to guard both the d5-pawn, and the bishop at h6. It also cannot move far away from the king, which is stuck in the centre and is preventing the last reserve, the rook at a1, from coming into play, which would immediately change the course of the play.

The scenario of this game is rather unusual: for a long time individual soloists perform on the stage, while the main forces of both sides merely observe what is happening. Why then did Black lose this

strange battle? Simply because at the decisive moment, when seriously short of time, he suddenly forgot to mobilise his 'spectators' ...

24 Rb4!

'An excellent square for the rook!' (Karpov). It would appear that 24 Ra4 too is strong, also preventing queenside castling (24 ... 0-0-0? 25 Bg4) and in the event of 24 ... Qd7 25 Rb4! gaining an important tempo for Kc2. But after 24 ... Ne7! 25 Be3 Rg8 26 Bb5+ (26 Kc1 Rg3!) 26 ... Kf8 27 Bh6+ Bg7 the situation would have become more complicated.



24 ... Bf6?

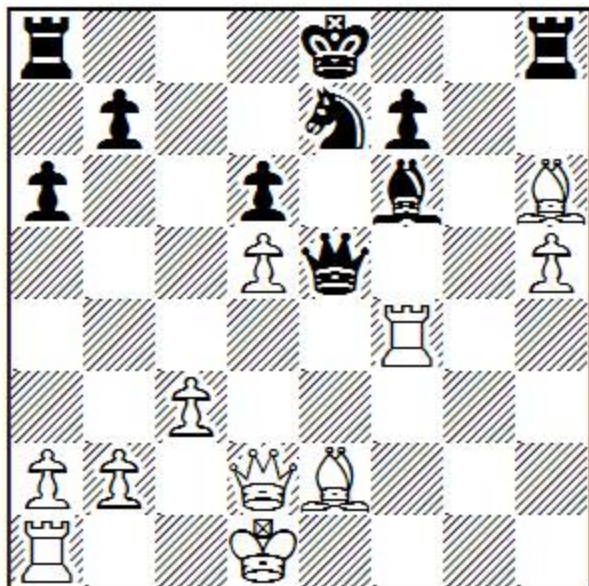
Losing control of the f4-square, which White promptly uses as a staging post and consolidates his position. Black did not have equality in any case, but after 24 ... Rg8 25 Bd3 (25 Rxb7? Nf4; 25 Qg5!? Ne7 26 Qxf5 Nxf5 27 Bg5 f6 is unclear) 25 ... Qh3! 26 Kc2 Nxe4 or 24 ... Ne7 25 Bg5 h6 26 Be3 Bg3 27 h5 Nxd5 he would at least have regained the pawn and retained some practical counter-chances.

25 h5 (driving back the knight and at the same time making his passed pawn more defensible) **25 ... Ne7** (25 ... Ne5? 26 Rf4) **26 Rf4!**

An obstinate rook! After 26 Qf4?! (to quickly activate the pieces at the cost of the d5-pawn) there could have followed 26 ... Rxh6! 27 Qxh6 Nxd5 28 Rg4 (28 Rxb7 Qe4!) 28 ... 0-0-0 29 Qd2 Re8 with a dangerous initiative for the exchange.

26 ... Qe5

The culminating moment of the battle has been reached.



27 Rf3?

The rook displays miracles of manoeuvrability, creating or, on the contrary, parrying one threat after another. But it is still working in isolation, and the undefended state of White's queenside demands extreme accuracy of him! By leaving his h5-pawn undefended for an instant, he throws away his advantage.

Meanwhile – a fact not mentioned by the commentators! – the rook had some better moves: 27 Rf1, 27 Rf2 or even the extravagant 27 Ra4. Say, after 27 Rf1 Black's problems are not solved by 27 ... Rxh6 28 Qxh6 Nf5 in view of 29 Rxf5 Qxf5 30 Qe3+ Kf8 31 Qf3, when he remains a pawn down. And in the event of 27 ... 0-0-0 28 Bf4! (but not 28 Kc2 Rxh6! 29 Bg4+ Kb8 30 Qxh6 Qe4+ with a draw) 28 ... Qxd5 29 Qxd5 Nxd5 30 Bd2 or 28 ... Qe4 29 c4 Rhg8 30 Qd3! Qxd3+ (30 ... Qg2 31 Kc2) 31 Bxd3 Bxb2 32 Rb1 he has a difficult endgame.

27 ... Nxd5?!

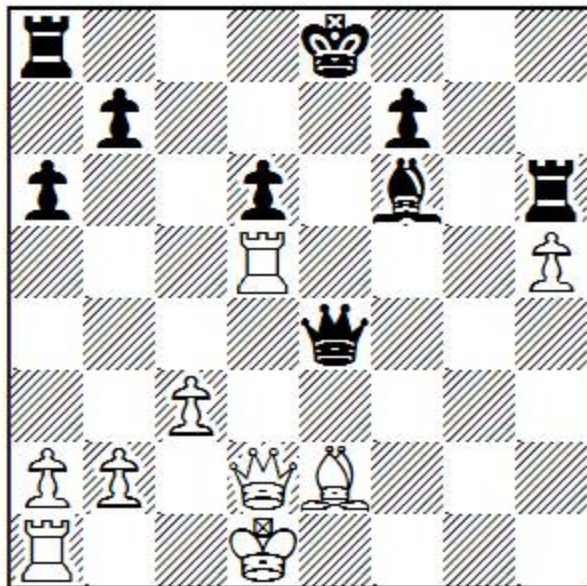
Karpov does not comment at all on this time-trouble move. A critical evaluation of it could have destroyed the myth of the completeness of the game, which states that the winner did not allow the opponent a single saving chance. Karpov wrote that the threat of 28 Bf4 'forced' Black to follow a dangerous path. But if Hort had castled queenside,

White would have had problems with his d5-pawn, with his king, which is blocking in the rook at a1, and with the overloading of his queen.

'After 27 ... 0-0-0! the outcome would have remained unclear. 28 Kc2? Rxh6 is obviously incorrect. If 28 Rd3 there follows 28 ... Rdg8! 29 Bf4 (29 Be3 Nf5 – G.K.) 29 ... Qf5 with the unpleasant threat of ... Rg2. 28 Be3 Nxd5 29 Bd4 Qe6 is unconvincing, while in the event of 28 Bf4 it is not apparent how to cast doubts on the simple 28 ... Qxh5!' (Dvoretsky). Moreover, after 29 c4 Qg6 30 Rf1 Qg7 31 Kc1 Ng6 32 Be3 Rde8 Black has a comfortable game.

28 Rd3! Rxh6 (28 ... Ne7? 29 Bf4 Qf5(e4) 30 Rxd6) 29 Rxd5 (of course, not 29 Qxh6? Bg5 30 Qh7 Ne3+ Karpov) 29 ... Qe4

After 29 ... Qe4 White had a choice between an attack with material equal – 30 Kc2, finally bringing the a1-rook into play, and a prosaic endgame with an extra pawn – 30 Rxd6 Qxd6 31 Qxd6 Rd8 32 Qxd8+ Bxd8 33 Kc2 etc.



30 Rd3!

A brilliant practical chance (Re3 is threatened), which brings instant success. The rook displays enviable efficiency, defeating the entire hostile army practically on its own! After 30 Qxh6 Qxd5+ 31 Kc2 Black could have defended by 31 ... Be5 32 Qe3 (32 Qg5?! Qe4+ 33 Bd3 Qa4+ 34 b3 Qa5 with equality) 32 ... 0-0-0 or even 31 ... Qf5+ 32 Bd3

Qf2+ 33 Qd2 (33 Kb3 Qb6+) 33 ... Qxd2+ 34 Kxd2 Ke7, and the endgame with opposite-coloured bishops promises a draw.

30 ... Qh1+?

A time-trouble catastrophe. 30 ... Qh7 was essential, for example: 31 Bg4 (31 Rxd6? Bg5!; nothing is also achieved by 31 Bf3 Bg5! or 31 Qe3+ Be5) 31 ... Bg5! 32 Qe2+ Kf8 33 Kc2 Re8 or 31 Kc2 0-0-0 32 Rf1 Re8 33 Bg4+ Kb8 with chances of a successful defence.

31 Kc2 Qxa1 32 Qxh6 Be5 33 Qg5!

Preventing queenside castling, threatening Qg8+ and opening the way for the h-pawn. In this hopeless position (if 33 ... Rd8, then 34 Kb3 or 34 a3) Black lost on time (1-0). The game was judged to be the best in the tournament.

Then, after a draw with Tukmakov, the 20-year-old grandmaster gained two more cool-headed wins. In his game with Bronstein, he employed his favourite plan with 6 Be2 against the Najdorf Variation of the Sicilian Defence. Bronstein tried to improve Black's play compared with the game Geller-Fischer (*Volume 2, Game No.98*, note to Black's 7th move), but without success. On the 23rd move White won a pawn, and at this moment, according to Roshal, above the noise of the press centre everyone heard the quiet and slow voice of Furman: 'When Tolya is ahead on material, he wins. About this I have no qualms.' The next day Karpov defeated Korchnoi in good style with Black. After draws with Stein and Smyslov, he beat Savon in the last round and, by catching Leonid Stein, he shared 1st-2nd places with him!

Regarding this, Botvinnik said in a telephone conversation to Kotov: 'Remember this day, 18 December 1971. In our country a new chess star of the first magnitude has appeared!' And on the pages of 64 Petrosian too gave a high appreciation of Karpov's play: 'I like his points, his approach to chess, I like his competitive character, his prudence. I liked the fact that towards the end of the tournament he put on speed, having evidently reckoned beforehand that thanks to his youth he would have more strength than those older than him, and with a spurt he overtook many as though they were standing still. I think that today Karpov is our main chess hope – perhaps in the next few years he will become the most insurmountable barrier in the path of western players to the world crown.'

The FIDE President Max Euwe also called Karpov a probable future chess king. And Anatoly himself, when asked in an interview 'will you be world champion?', answered with disarming frankness: 'Yes, I

probably will. Only not in the next four years. There is too much that I don't yet know.'

Only a couple of weeks had passed, when Karpov set off to the traditional tournament in Hastings (1971/72), where he started with 7 out of 8! Then, after a draw with Black against Gligoric, he won another game and ... sensed that his strength was on the wane: 'To be honest, I was simply worn out.' After a loss in the 14th round to Korchnoi, 'by incredible efforts' he defeated Markland in the decisive game – and he caught his only rival: 1-2. Karpov and Korchnoi – 11 out of 15; 3-4. Byrne and Mecking – 9½; 5-6. Gligoric and Najdorf – 8½; 7-8. Andersson and Unzicker – 8, etc.

His next appearance, in the USSR Team Championship (Moscow, March 1972), is memorable for the splendid positional wins with White against Smyslov and Taimanov, and with Black against Stein. In this game Anatoly demonstrated that amazing tenacity and resourcefulness in defence which was later to become famous, and he accurately parried the direct attack of his formidable opponent. Such ingenuity had distinguished Karpov from his very childhood, when he did not yet know any opening theory and often ended up in difficult positions.

That same spring a grandiose double-round blitz tournament of the strongest Soviet players was held in Moscow. By winning 12 successive games in the second half (against Kholmov, Tal, Stein, Bronstein, Polugayevsky, Taimanov, Balashov etc.), Karpov ended up sharing 1st-2nd places with Tukmakov from Odessa. 'This exhausting event for a long time removed Karpov's taste for blitz, but he did not forget what for some reason he considered to be a failure. When he happened to be in Odessa, he found an opportunity to meet Tukmakov in a blitz match. With the score standing at 0-13 his opponent surrendered ...' (Roshal)

Soon Anatoly led the Soviet team in his second Student Olympiad (Graz, August 1972). A year earlier he had played on board three (+7=1), but now he showed himself to be a worthy leader (+5=4). Anatoly Bykhovsky, the trainer of the USSR youth team, recalls:

'Those Olympiads genuinely revealed Karpov for me. In Puerto Rico the ease and elegance of his play created an indelible impression. Usually he was the first to finish his games, after spending not more than an hour on his clock. After losing, his opponents looked somehow perplexed: it appeared that they did not understand at all the ideas and moves of the young grandmaster. In my view, Karpov has such an

original playing style, that it is hard even to name his chess predecessor, and this is always an indication of genuine talent ... In Graz he played Robert Hübner. We have always found it hard against the West German team, and here Hübner was leading Karpov in the battle for the best result on board one. This was the same Hübner who had been defeated only narrowly in a Candidates match by Petrosian (and the same Hübner who soon was again to perform brilliantly at the World Olympiad in Skopje). It was a critical encounter in all respects: it was due to determine the order of strength for many years ahead and show how Karpov compared with the leading western grandmaster. Anatoly showed that he understood the position both more subtly, and more deeply!'

Such an 'acquaintance' with foreign stars of the new generation was typical of Karpov: before Hübner, I should remind you, he defeated Timman (1967/68), and Andersson (1969), and the 'chess Pele' – the future two-times winner of Interzonal tournaments, the Brazilian Henrique Mecking (Hastings 1971/72).

He also shone in his first world Olympiad (Skopje, autumn 1972), making the best score on the 1st reserve board (+12–1=2). Tal: 'This was a genuine "benefit performance" by Anatoly. Only in Skopje did I realise that Karpov was indeed capable of the highest achievements. Previously too he had gained excellent results, but in the creative sense his play did not impress me. Now I admire Karpov's games purely chess-wise. At the Olympiad, on his own he played almost as many such games as all the other team members put together. And therefore I find it impossible to choose which of his games was the best.'

By a decision of FIDE, Karpov, as world junior champion, was admitted into the 1973 Interzonal tournament without having to qualify. This relieved him of the need to play in the Zonal, 40th USSR Championship, and together with Petrosian and Keres he set off to a super-tournament in San Antonio (November-December 1972), arranged on the wave of the chess boom reigning in the USA after Fischer's victory in the match with Spassky. There the young grandmaster, initially competing with Larsen and Keres, again started with 7 out of 8!

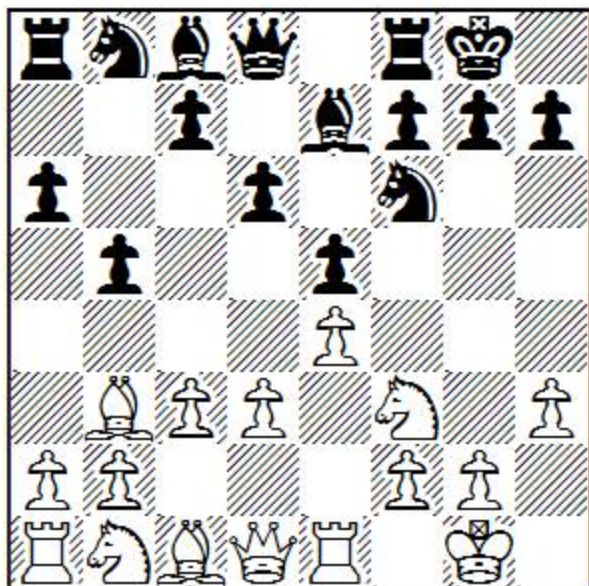
Game 51

A.Karpov-S.Gligoric

San Antonio 1972, 8th round

Ruy Lopez C94

1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bb5 a6 4 Ba4 Nf6 5 0-0 Be7 6 Re1 b5 7 Bb3 d6 8 c3 0-0 9 h3 Nb8 10 d3



The theoretical disputes over 10 d4, which have lasted till this day, were something that Karpov would be prepared for a year later, but for the moment, against an expert on the Breyer Variation, he chooses a more restrained, but no less venomous set-up, where the slow advance of the d-pawn is compensated by the threat of it appearing at d4 at a moment that is more favourable for White.

10 ... Nbd7 11 Nbd2 Bb7 12 Nf1 Nc5 13 Bc2 Re8 14 Ng3 Bf8 15 b4

Driving the knight from its strong position, but also giving the opponent a pretext for counterplay on the queenside. In the event of 15 Nh2 Black succeeds in carrying out the counter 15 ... d5! (15 ... Ne6 16 d4 exd4 cxd4 c5! with equality, Schmid-Spassky, San Juan 1969) 16 Qf3 h6 17 Nf5 a5 18 Ng4 Nxg4 19 hxg4 a4 20 Be3 Ne6 21 Qg3 dxe4 22 dxe4 Qf6 23 Rad1 Rad8 24 Qf3 Ng5 25 Qe2 Bc6 with a slight advantage (Vasyukov-Karpov, Leningrad 1971).

15 ... Ncd7 16 d4

Tal several times played 16 Bb3, provoking double-edged complications: 16 ... d5!? 17 Bg5 a5 18 a3 dxe4 19 Nxe4 h6 20 Nxf6+ Nxf6 21 Nxe5 Rxe5! 22 Rxe5 hxg5 23 Rxb5 Bd5. However, it is safer

to reply 16 ... a5 17 a3 axb4 18 cxb4 h6 19 d4 (19 Nf5 d5! Tal-Spassky, 11th matchgame, Tbilisi 1965) 19 ... c5 20 bxc5 dxc5 21 dxe5 Nxe5 22 Nxe5 Rxe5 23 Bb2 Re8 24 Qf3 c4 25 Bc2 (Tal-Smejkal, Tallinn 1971), and now Black can equalise with the queen manoeuvre 25 ... Qd2! 26 Rac1 Qg5.

16 ... h6

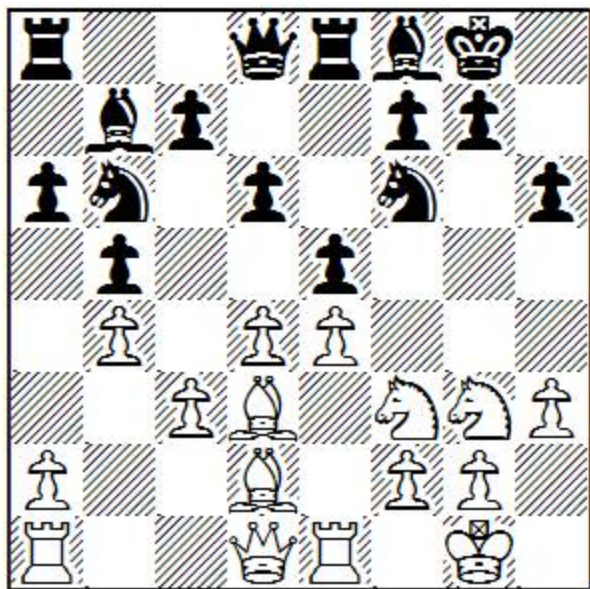
It is easier to equalise with the simplifying operation 16 ... a5!? 17 Bd2 (or 17 a3 axb4 18 cxb4 c5 Vasyukov-Averbakh, Moscow 1964) 17 ... axb4! 18 cxb4 exd4 19 Nxd4 d5 (Tal-Timman, Niksic 1983), which is what put the variation with 10 d3 out of use.

17 Bd2 (a prophylactic defence of the b4-pawn against attacks by the bishop at f8) **17 ... Nb6**

‘A solid positional move in Gligoric’s style. The central counter 17 ... d5 could have taken the game along the lines of tactical complications, which are by no means without danger for Black.’ (Karpov)

18 Bd3

Continuing the useful prophylaxis: from d3 the bishop hinders counterplay with ... a6-a5. Therefore Black begins preparing ... c7-c5.



18 ... Rc8

Six months later the game Karpov-Spassky (Moscow 1973) went 18 ... g6 19 Qc2 Nfd7 20 Rad1 Bg7 (20 ... c5!? 21 bxc5 dxc5 22 Nxe5 Nxe5 23 dxe5 Rxe5 24 Bf4 Re6 is also not bad) 21 dxe5! dxe5 22 c4!

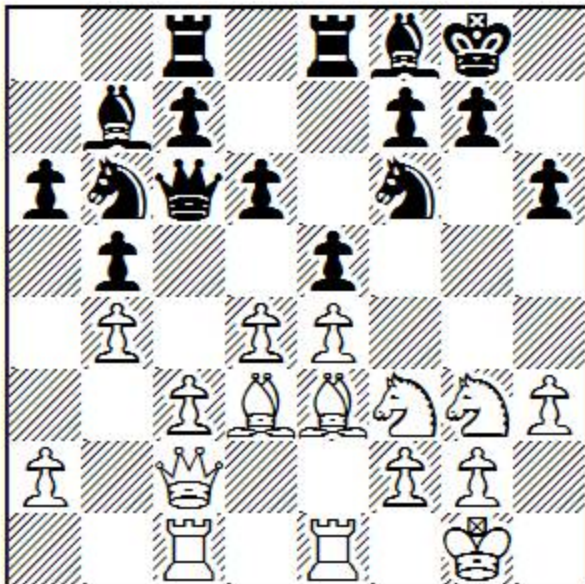
bxc4 23 Bxc4 Qe7? (23 ... Nxc4 24 Qxc4 Re6! 25 Be3 Rd6 was correct, with equality – Karpov) 24 Bb3! c5 25 a4! (it turns out that White is not obliged to take on c5, but can strengthen his position by giving up the exchange) 25 ... c4 26 Ba2 Bc6 27 a5 Ba4 28 Qc1 Nc8 29 Bxh6 Bxd1 30 Rxd1 Nd6? (Karpov recommends 30 ... Nf8 31 Bxc4 Nd6 32 Bg5 Bf6) 31 Bxg7 Kxg7 32 Qg5!! (the decisive invasion; 32 Qd2? Nf6 33 Qxd6? is bad on account of 33 ... Rad8!) 32 ... f6 33 Qg4 Kh7 34 Nh4!, and Black resigned in view of 34 ... Nf8 35 Nxg6! Nxg6 36 Rxd6! Qxd6 37 Qh5+ Kg8 38 Nf5!

19 Qc2 Qd7?

‘The start of an unsuccessful manoeuvre. The queen heads for c6, intending to stand in front of its pawns. But why then did Black waste time on 18 ... Rc8 ?’ (Karpov)

The critical position would have arisen after 19 ... exd4 20 cxd4 c5 21 bxc5 (21 d5!? Nfd7!) 21 ... dxc5 22 d5. Karpov judged it to be advantageous to White. ‘At any event, neither Gligoric nor Spassky went in for this position.’ All the same, this was the only way that Black could have justified his move 18 ... Rc8, following up with 22 ... c4 23 Bf1 b4 or 23 ... c3.

20 Rad1 Qc6 21 Be3 Na4 22 Rc1 (threatening c3-c4) 22 ... Nb6



23 Qb1

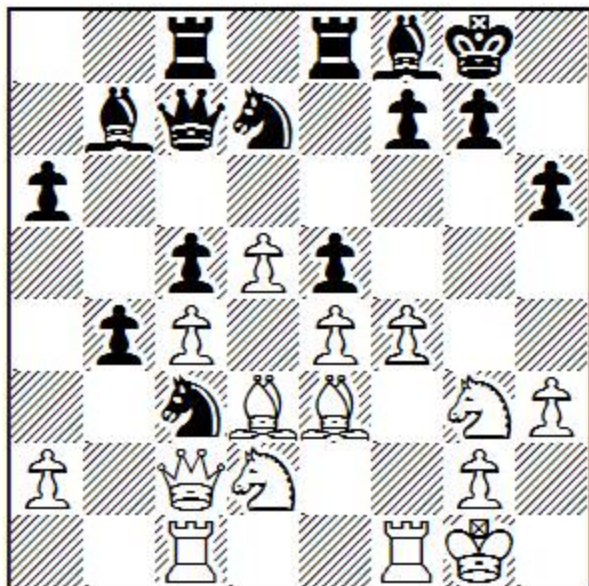
Again prophylaxis, although on this occasion 'the immediate 23 Nd2 was better, followed by Nb3 (and possibly Na5), not fearing 23 ... d5 in view of 24 dxe5 Rxe5 25 Bd4 dxe4 26 Ndxe4.' (Karpov). The delay of just one move allows Black to prevent the unpleasant knight manoeuvre.

23 ... Qd7 24 Nd2 c5! 25 bxc5 dxc5 26 d5

Because of the vulnerability of his knight at b6, Black does not manage to advance his pawn to c4, and White creates an impregnable bastion in the centre, cramping the opponent's forces.

26 ... Na4 27 c4! b4 28 Rf1! Qc7 29 f4 Nd7 30 Qc2 Nc3

Black is ready to give up a pawn – merely to force the exchange of the white bishop for this knight, so as then to try and erect a defensive wall on the dark squares.



31 f5! Nf6 32 Ne2!

'It was perhaps sounder to win a pawn by 32 Nf3 and 33 Bd2, but during the game I thought that then Gligoric would succeed in restraining by assault on the kingside by organising a dark-squared blockade (... Be7 and ... Nh7). Therefore I decided not to waste time.' (Karpov)

32 ... Nxe2+ 33 Bxe2 Bd6 34 g4! Kf8!

A blockade can no longer be organised by 34 ... Qd8 35 h4 Nh7 36 Nf3 Be7 due to 37 Kg2 Bxh4 38 Nxh4 Qxh4 39 Rh1 Qf6 40 Rh5 Qd6

41 Rch1 Kf8 42 Rxh6! gxh6 43 Rxh6, shattering the defence. Therefore the black king flees from the danger zone.

35 h4 Ke7 36 g5 hxg5 37 hxg5 Nd7 38 Bg4

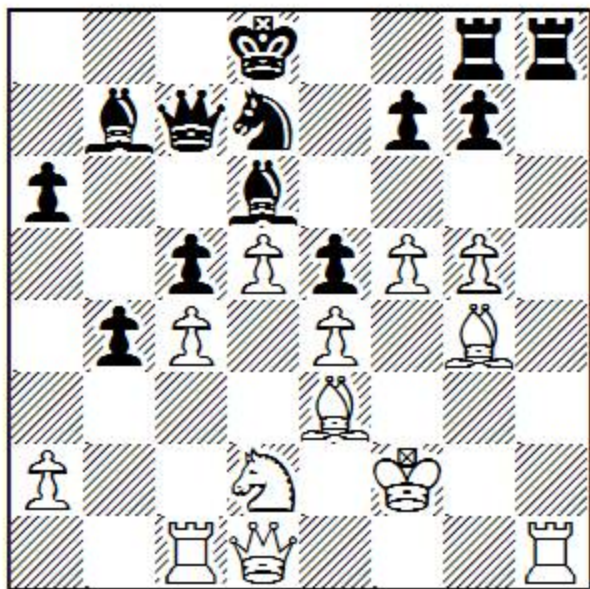
'The first onslaught has enabled White to gain an appreciable advantage in space. To build on his success he has to bring up the reserves.' (Karpov)

38 ... Rg8 39 Kf2 Rh8 40 Rh1 Rcg8 41 Qd1

41 a3! was stronger: 41 ... a5 42 Qa4 (with the threat of Nb3) 42 ... Nb6 43 Qb5! (the queen is quite safe in the thick of the enemy forces, and Black's bastions quickly collapse) 43 ... Rxh1 44 Rxh1 Ra8 45 f6+! (Karpov) 45 ... gxf6 46 Rh6!, or 44 ... Bc8 45 Qxa5 Bd7 46 f6+ gxf6 47 Bxd7 Nxd7 48 Qxc7 Bxc7 49 axb4 cxb4 50 gxf6+ Nxf6 51 Kf3 Ng4 52 Ba7 Kd7 53 c5 and wins.

41 ... Kd8

41 ... f6, which Karpov considered necessary, would also hardly have enabled Black to escape serious difficulties. And 41 ... Qa5 42 Qb3 Bc8 would not have prevented White from advantageously opening the queenside: 43 Kg3 Kd8 44 Rhf1! Kc7 45 Ra1!



42 Qg1!

At first sight an inexplicable queen manoeuvre. 'Such moves are very difficult to find!' writes Karpov, and he very intelligibly explains the reasons for his decision:

‘White has an obvious spatial advantage. In order to increase his positional gains, he needs to find a clear plan for regrouping his pieces. Here are my basic thoughts regarding the position: 1) Black has only one obvious weakness – the c5-pawn; an attack on it should be arranged quickly – this will enable the manoeuvrability of the opponent’s pieces to be restricted; 2) the best square for the king is f3, where it is not liable to be checked, it over-protects the bishop at g4, and it opens the g1-a7 diagonal for the bishop and queen battery and the 2nd rank for rook manoeuvres; 3) White must fight to control the h-file and develop an initiative on the kingside; at a favourable moment he can switch the entire weight of the struggle to the opposite flank, exploiting the great mobility of his forces. White’s last move complies with all these conditions.’

42 ... Nb6 43 Rh2 Qe7?

Black does not yet sense the danger to his queenside and he tries to fight for control of the h-file (44 Qh1 Qd8), instead of denying the white knight the possibility of transferring via b3 to a5 – 43 ... a5! and ... a5-a4.

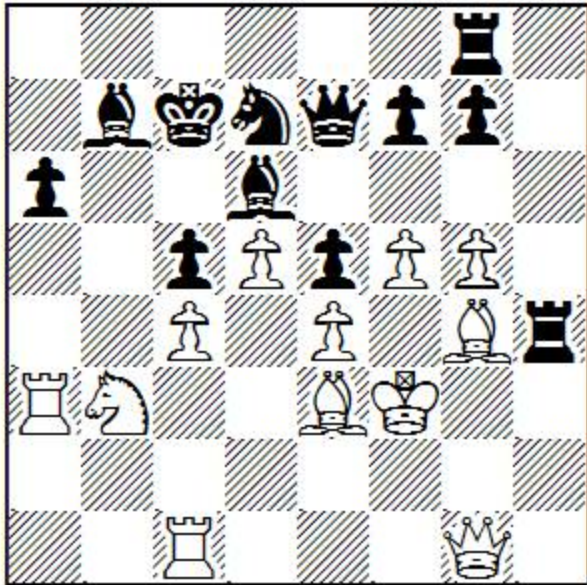
44 Nb3

Now that this knight is paralysing Black’s queenside, his resources for resisting quickly evaporate.

44 ... Kc7 45 Kf3! Nd7 46 a3! bxa3 47 Ra2!

The planned regrouping has been carried out, and it transpires that the black king, by fleeing to the queenside, has gone from the frying pan into the fire.

47 ... Rh4 48 Rxa3



48 ... Rgh8

Clever tactics – 48 ... Nf6 49 gxf6 gxf6 – do not help: 50 Ra5! Rgxg4 51 Qxg4 Rxc4 52 Kxc4 Qd8 53 Nxc5 Bxc5 54 Rxc5+ Kd7 55 Rb1 Ba8 56 Bd2, and the white king easily hides from the checks (56 ... Qg8+ 57 Kf3 Qh8 58 Ra5 Qh3+ 59 Ke2 Qg4+ 60 Kd3 etc.).

49 Rb1 Rb8

The threat of Na5 forces the rook to return, which signifies the failure of Black's last hopes.

50 Qe1! Rxc4 51 Kxc4 Bc8 52 Qa5+ 1-0

If 52 ... Rb6, then 53 Nxc5 Bxc5 54 Rxb6! is one way to win.

Then, however, Anatoly obviously became tired: after making an oversight in a good position, he lost to Portisch. Then in the 13th round, still the sole leader, he was unable to beat Kaplan, and at the finish he spared Mecking, although before the game the latter had been 'very nervous' and looked at him 'like a hunted wild animal'. Even so the result was not bad: 1-3. Karpov, Petrosian and Portisch – 10½ out of 15; 4. Gligoric – 10; 5. Keres – 9½; 6-7. Hort and Suttles – 9; 8-9. Larsen and Mecking – 8½, etc.

On the day of the concluding round Karpov met Fischer for the first time. The organisers invited the world champion to visit the tournament and, on learning that he had been delayed, they even postponed the start of the round by 15 minutes. 'Now Fischer is late not only for his

own games, but also for those of others,' Petrosian remarked. 'We sat and waited. Fischer appeared together with Euwe, and then Fischer came up onto the stage and shook hands with each of the players. That is the sum total of my impressions,' writes Karpov in *Chess is my Life*, but in the book *Sestra moya Kaissa* (Caissa is my sister, 1990) he adds: 'He appeared on the last day, which was not too fortunate. The winners – and I was one of them – peacefully split the points and Fischer, who sat in the audience for no more than quarter of an hour, understood the situation and disappeared.'

It is possible that already then, at the end of 1972, not only Botvinnik, Petrosian and Tal, but also Fischer himself, after carefully observing Karpov at the board, sensed that an intervention in the battle for the chess crown would soon be made by this very 'serious boy'!

‘This is not my Cycle’

While preparing for his first and, as it later transpired, his only, Interzonal tournament, Karpov played in Budapest the spring of 1973 (+4=11; 2nd place after Geller) and in an unusual match-tournament of three USSR teams, where he beat Spassky and Taimanov (+2=2) on board one.

That year, taking into account the rise in the number of strong players, FIDE for the first time divided the Interzonal stage into two separate tournaments, and from then on, in order to qualify for the Candidates, one had to finish not in the first six, but in the first three places. The division was made by rating and led to an obvious mismatch: in Petropolis, Brazil, there was only one of the six candidates from the previous cycle – Geller, whereas in Leningrad (June 1973) there were five: Korchnoi, Larsen, Hübner, Taimanov and Uhlmann. There was also the formidable Tal, who had just won five tournaments in succession, as well as the young Karpov, who was enjoying constant successes. And only three places?! However, as Tal wisely remarked, if the task of finishing in the first three proves too difficult, what is the sense in contending for the title of world champion?

Karpov set himself the audacious task of winning the Interzonal tournament (which promised a comparatively weaker opponent in the first Candidates match) or at least of occupying one of the qualifying places. Many years later, when bans were lifted, he revealed in the press that he had prepared for this tournament together with Korchnoi:

‘On one occasion some friends called unexpectedly, we had a pleasant, jovial evening, and someone suggested: let’s try and guess who will play in the final Candidates match, and when the final pair has been decided, we’ll open the envelopes. I remember that I wrote: Spassky-Petrosian. I was sure that they were the strongest of the Candidates ... I didn’t put myself down, because I genuinely didn’t think that it was my cycle. Firstly, I had hardly any experience of playing at this level, and secondly, I thought that for the moment my main opponents were objectively stronger than me. Of course, these forecasts were immediately forgotten by everyone, including myself. But when the final pair – Korchnoi and I – had been determined, our friend, who had kept the forecasts, came and showed them all. In only one did

Korchnoi-Karpov appear, and it was written in Korchnoi's familiar hand ...

This shows enviable foresight, but first the two 'Ks' had to overcome the Interzonal barrier! In this tournament Karpov was seconded not only by Furman, but also the Muscovite Yuri Razuvaev, with whom, like Balashov, he had been acquainted since the times of the Botvinnik school. After the Student Olympiad in Puerto Rico (1971) Anatoly had asked his team colleagues to help him and Furman in the forthcoming world championship qualifying cycle. It should be said that the two Yuri Sergeevichs – Balashov and Razuvaev, now well-known grandmasters and trainers, were among the most erudite players of the young generation. Thus was born the training staff of the future world champion

'At the start, Karpov's play perhaps lacked the brilliance that distinguished Korchnoi's play,' wrote Alexander Kotov, the chief arbiter of the Leningrad Interzonal. 'His wins did not come in series, but as ones interspersed with half points. The giants did not succumb to his blows, although he claimed quite a number of victims. Karpov played slightly cautiously, did not take risks, and at times avoided unclear complications. Well, such play is a sure way of achieving success in qualifying events. But when, by the will of fate, complications arose on the board, Karpov was able to figure them out with the precision of a cybernetic machine. Here he was prepared to sacrifice, and he was not afraid of any sharpening of the position.'

In the first six rounds he won with Black against Estevez, Tukmakov and Cuellar (after parrying the opponent's fierce attack with difficulty in time-trouble), and drew with Hübner (in a tough, fascinating struggle), Korchnoi and Taimanov. At that moment the leading group looked like this: Larsen – 5½ out of 6; Byrne and Korchnoi – 5; Karpov – 4½; Kuzmin – 4. It was time to actuate the white pieces – Karpov's most dangerous weapon throughout his career!

Game 52

A.Karpov-G.Kuzmin

Interzonal Tournament, Leningrad 1973, 7th round

French Defence C09

1 e4 e6 (to avoid being tortured in the Spanish, Gennady Kuzmin chose a defence that he rarely employed) 2 d4 d5 3 Nd2

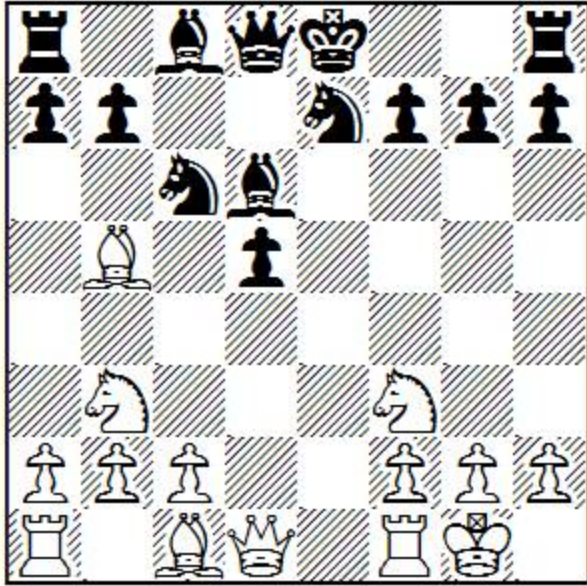
At that time this quiet Tarrasch-Geller move brought Karpov almost 100% success. But his matches with Korchnoi (1974 and 1978) showed that it is not at all easy for White to win against the position with an isolated pawn, and from 1982 Anatoly also began employing 3 Nc3.

3 ... c5

Previously Kuzmin had played 3 ... dxe4. On this occasion he decided to improve Black's play in comparison with Karpov's games against Krogus (Kuybyshev 1970) and Vaganian (Budapest 1973). But here he was unlucky – this was his 'opponent's territory': Karpov and Furman had been engaged in solving the secrets of the 3 Nd2 variation since the start of the 1970s.

4 exd5 exd5 5 Ngf3 (in Baguio, Karpov switched to 5 Bb5+) 5 ... Nc6 (5 ... a6 – *Game No. 15*) 6 Bb5 Bd6 7 dxc5 Bxc5 8 0-0 Nge7 9 Nb3 Bd6

This move, later employed by Korchnoi, was comparatively unexplored at that time. In the aforementioned games the usual 9 ... Bb6 10 Re1 0-0 occurred, and Krogus failed to hold out after 11 Be3 Bg4 12 Bxb6 Qxb6 (12 ... axb6!?) 13 Bxc6 Nxc6 14 Qxd5 Nb4 15 Qe4 Bxf3 16 gxf3, while Vaganian ran into 11 Bg5! (exploiting the fact that the e7-knight's defence has been weakened) 11 ... h6 12 Bh4 g5 (exposing the king; 12 ... Re8!? 13 h3 a6 14 Bd3 Be6 was better) 13 Bg3 Nf5 14 Qd2 Nxe3 15 hxe3 Qf6 16 c3 Bf5! ('an excellent pawn sacrifice', although 16 ... a6 17 Bf1 Rd8 18 Nfd4 Bd7 19 Be2 g4 was also possible) 17 Qxd5 Rad8 18 Qc4 Bd3 19 Qa4 Bxb5 20 Qxb5 g4 21 Nfd4 Nxd4 22 cxd4 a6 23 Qh5 Bxd4 24 Qxg4+ Qg7 25 Qf3! (a very subtle decision, to stay in the middlegame and seek a way to attack the king) 25 ... Bxb2 26 Rad1 b6 27 Qb7 Rxd1 28 Rxd1 Qg4 29 Rb1 Rd8 30 Qxa6 Rd1+ 31 Rxd1 Qxd1+ 32 Qf1 Qc2 33 Qb5 Ba3 34 Qd5!? (not objecting to the exchange of the queenside pawns) 34 ... Bf8 35 Qd2 Qe4 36 Kh2 Bc5 37 Nc1 Kg7 38 Nd3 Qd4 39 Qe2 Bd6? (39 ... Qc4 Karpov) 40 Kh3! Qd5 41 Nf4 Bxf4 42 gxf4, and White won this queen ending.

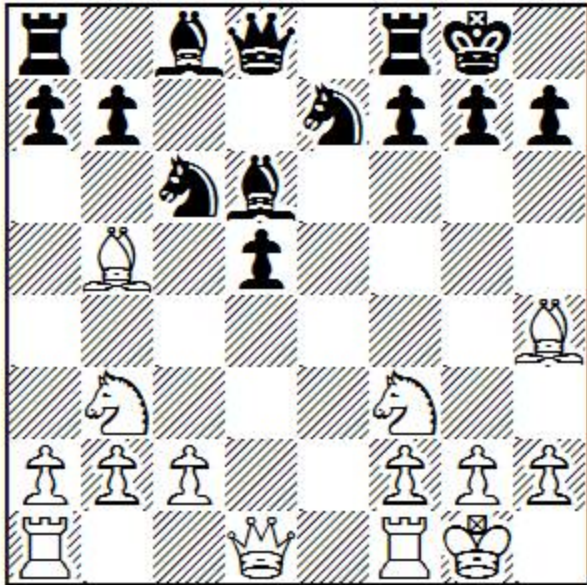


10 Bg5!

In the Moscow match with Korchnoi (1974) 10 c3 Bg4 11 Nbd4 0-0 was tested several times, and only in the 18th game did Karpov revert to the energetic bishop move.

10 ... 0-0 11 Bh4

With the idea of Bg3: White concedes two tempi to exchange the dark-squared bishops. Eighteen months later, in the aforementioned game with Korchnoi, the optimal arrangement of the forces was found – 11 Re1! (hindering the development of the queen at b6) 11 ... Qc7 12 c3 Bg4 13 h3 Bh5 14 Be2! h6 15 Bxe7! Nxe7 16 Nfd4, and after 16 ... Bxe2 17 Qxe2 a6 18 Qf3 Rad8 a standard position was reached, where White has a slight but enduring advantage, but Black has the possibility of gaining a draw after a gruelling defence.



11 ... Qc7?!

Missing a chance to achieve a good game. This move indicates an inadequate knowledge of the subtleties of such positions: the queen stands better at b6! In analysis after the game 11 ... Bg4 12 Bg3 Bxg3 13 hxg3 Qb6! 14 Bd3 etc. was examined. The opponent's plan appealed to Kuzmin, and in his 13th round game with Uhlmann he improved White's play with 12 Be2! – as Karpov himself played six months later (*Game No.53*).

But games from the following year showed that the immediate 11 ... Qb6! is better, when Black has no opening problems, for example: 12 Bd3 a5 13 a4 Nf5! 14 Bxf5 Bxf5 15 Bg3 Bxg3 16 hxg3 Be4 with equality (Balashov-Gulko, Moscow 1974).

12 Bg3 Bxg3 13 hxg3 Bg4

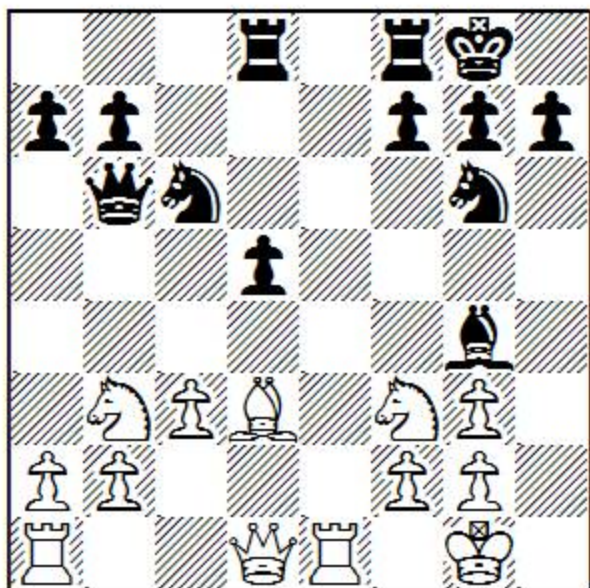
In positions with an isolated d5-pawn it is useful for Black to exchange this bishop – so that at least it should not be transformed into a 'large pawn', standing at e6.

14 Re1 Rad8 15 c3 Qb6 (finally the queen stands where it needs to be)
16 Bd3 16 ... Ng6

Avoiding creating any weaknesses, but also not preventing the opponent from strengthening his position. With the typical manoeuvre 16 ... Bh5 (and if 17 Qc2, then 17 ... Bg6) Black would also have

retained hopes of gradually dampening White's slight initiative by accurate and patient defence.

'Of course, 16 ... d4 would have been answered by 17 c4,' writes Karpov. But then after 17 ... Ng6 White could have gradually lost his entire advantage! I think that in fact there would have followed 17 Bxh7+! Kh8 18 Bd3 dxc3 19 bxc3, when Black has no compensation for the pawn (if 19 ... Nf5?!, then 20 Qd2! is strong, with the idea of 20 ... Nxg3 21 Qf4 or 20 ... Bxf3 21 gxf3 Nxg3 22 Kg2!).



17 Qc2 Bxf3 18 gxf3 Rd6?

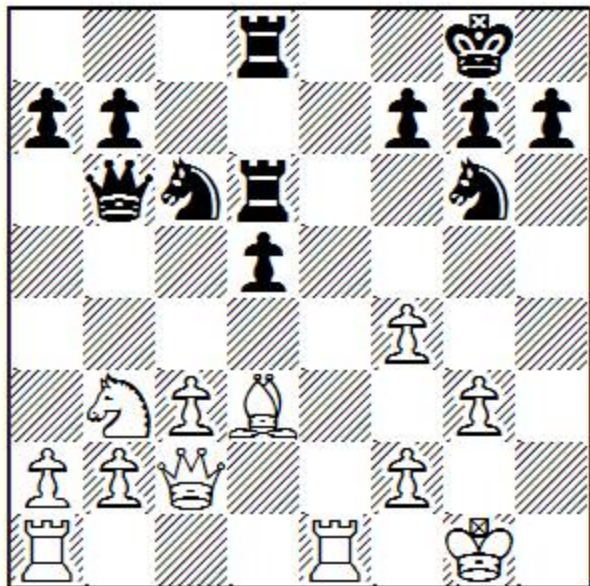
Seemingly active and consistent: by defending his knight, Black ensures the advance of his h7-pawn to h4. But if one looks ahead, it will be seen that this entire operation is simply a waste of time.

In such structures you should get rid of the isolated pawn at the first convenient opportunity, and now was precisely such a moment – 18 ... d4!, since 19 c4?! is unfavourable on account of 19 ... Nce5! Karpov considers 19 f4 dxc3 20 bxc3 'with an interesting position, in which White's pawns restrict the black knights on both wings.' But, in my view, after 20 ... Rfe8 21 Be4 Nf8 22 Re3 and Rae1 White's advantage is comparatively slight.

19 f4 Rfd8

It is good to defend the 'isolani' indirectly – increasing the activity of the pieces and deploying the rooks on adjacent files. But here both

rooks are propping up the d5-pawn, which at the moment nothing is attacking! Alas, 19 ... d4?! is now too late on account of 20 c4, and after 20 ... Nb4 21 Qd2 Nxd3 22 Qxd3 Qd8 23 Re4 the d-pawn is lost.



20 a3!

The effect of this quiet move is equivalent to a thunder clap: Black finally loses any hope of playing ... d5-d4 and is left without counterplay. Whereas 'White's plan is clear: he will transfer his knight to f3, double rooks on the e-file, and then, according to circumstances, advance his f-pawn and his queenside pawns.' (Karpov)

20 ... h5?!

Black's chances are associated with play in the centre and on the queenside, but definitely not on the kingside. However, after 20 ... a5 21 Nd2 and Nf3 he would also have been a long way from equalising.

21 Kg2 h4 22 Re2!

Karpov is in his element! The direct 22 Rh1 after 22 ... hxg3 23 fxg3 Re8! would have obliged White to neutralise an invasion on the e-file. 22 Nd2 looks quite good, with the idea of 22 ... h3+ 23 Kg1! and Nf3. But Karpov's decision is far more effective. Realising that his opponent is labouring under an illusion, he does not hurry and in the first instance does not allow him even the slightest activity. In addition, he takes control of the e-file, along which the decisive blow will be landed. It is

interesting that the invasion along the h-file remained only a threat (although one that Black had to reckon with!).

22 ... Nf8 23 Nd2 Rh6 24 Nf3 hxc3 25 fxc3 Nd7

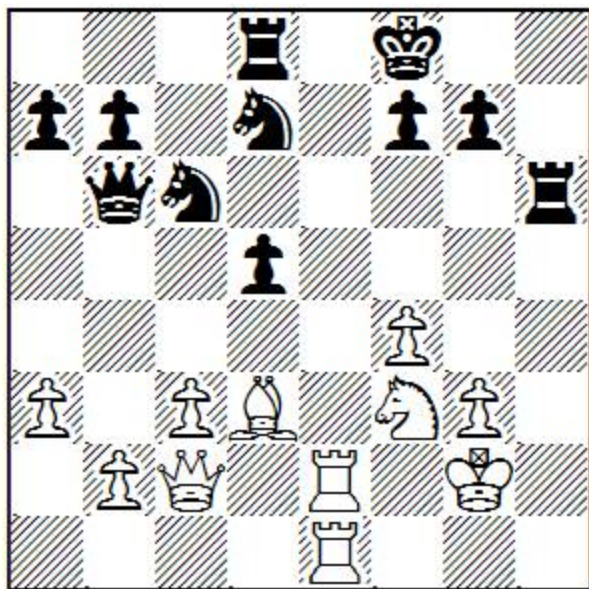
25 ... d4 26 c4 would not have eased Black's fate, for example: 26 ... Nd7 27 b4!, 26 ... a5 27 Rae1, 26 ... Qc5 27 f5!, or 26 ... Qa5 27 c5! and Rae1.

26 Rae1

The two sides have completed their planned regroupings. And it turns out that White's pressure on the e-file is very real, whereas Black's possession of the h-file does not promise anything, since his rook is unsupported. Not having found the time for activity on the queenside, Black has condemned his queen to inaction. His pieces are scattered in disorder, whereas White's forces are ready to attack the king's fortress. This is where a difference in positional understanding tells, even among grandmasters.

26 ... Kf8

Other moves are no better.



27 g4!

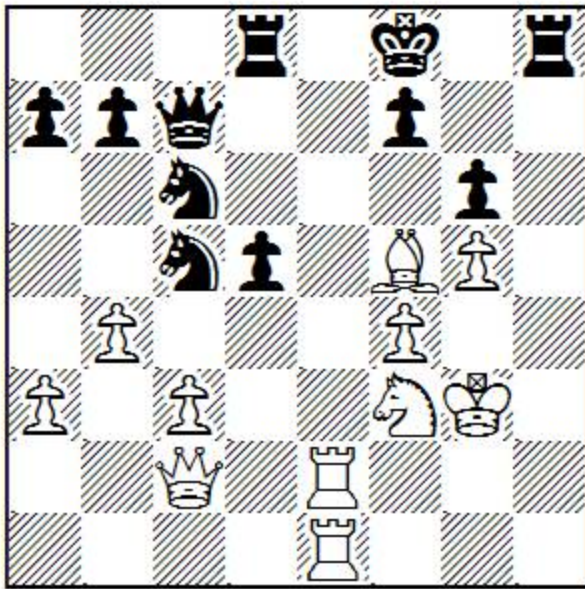
When clear-cut aims appeared, already in his youth Karpov was able to switch quickly from thinking in patterns and schemes to concrete calculation. Some of his decisions may seem unexpected (for

example, the exchange of queens at the very end), but it is all calculated with exceptional accuracy.

27 ... Qc7

Black has nothing on which to base any counterplay, and his position is hopeless: 27 ... Nc5 (27 ... g6?! 28 g5 and Bxg6!) 28 Bf5! Qb3 (28 ... Qc7 29 g5 Rh8 30 Kg3, as in the game) 29 Qxb3 Nxb3 30 Bd7! f6 31 Re8+ Rxe8 32 Rxe8+ Kf7 33 g5 or 30 ... g6 31 Re8+ Rxe8 32 Rxe8+ Kg7 33 Bxc6 bxc6 34 Re7 and wins.

28 g5 Rh8 29 Kg3! Nc5 30 Bf5 g6 31 b4!



31 ... Ne4+

After 31 ... gxf5 (31 ... Nd7 32 Bxg6!) 32 bxc5 the black king is unable to escape: 32 ... d4 33 Rh2! Rg8 34 Qxf5 with the threats of Rh7 and Qf6, and queen moves are no better – 32 ... Qa5 33 Re3! and Qxf5, 32 ... Qc8 33 Rh2 Rg8 34 Rh7!, or 32 ... Qd7 33 Rh2 Rg8 34 Rh6!

32 Bxe4 dxe4 33 Qxe4 Kg7 34 b5 Na5 35 Qe7! Qxe7

In the event of 35 ... Qxc3 (with the faint hope of 36 Re5?? Rh3+!) White wins by 36 Re3! Qb2 37 Rb1! Qxb1 38 Qf6+ Kg8 39 Qxd8+ and Qxa5 with an extra piece, or 36 ... Qc8 37 Re6! Kg8 38 Rxc6+! fxc6 39 Re6 with crushing threats.

36 Rxe7 Rd3 37 Rc7 Nb3 38 Kg4 Rf8 39 Ree7 1-0

The invasion of the knight at e5 is unavoidable. A model of strategic planning, based on an assessment of the genuinely significant features of the position.

The next day Karpov faced a difficult test – ‘Spanish torture’ in his game with Tal, who was eager to make amends for his extremely poor start (the ex-world champion was unwell, but he categorically rejected all suggestions by the doctors to withdraw from the tournament). The adjourned position – two rooks and a passed a-pawn against rook, bishop and knight, plus three pawns each on the kingside – looked dangerous for Black, but he was able to save it on the resumption. Anatoly promptly pointed out the strongest move for White, found in his sleep(!), which, however, was also insufficient to win. After this game the American master Zuckerman, Byrne’s second and a friend of Fischer, declared: ‘If Karpov can save such positions, it’s altogether impossible to win against him!’ But in the words of Karpov, his main rival Korchnoi ‘reproached Tal, without foundation, for not wanting to win a superior adjourned position ...’

Then Karpov crushed Quinteros (one of the five ‘best game’ prizes) and, having scored 7 out of 9, moved into second place. A point ahead of him was Korchnoi, who had just defeated Larsen (*Game No.20*) and Byrne. But he only needed to stumble in the 12th round, and Karpov, after beating Uhlmann in a difficult struggle, caught up with him! In the 13th round the young grandmaster won another ‘Spanish duel’ against Gligoric, but Korchnoi also won. In the 14th round Korchnoi drew with Smejkal, who had now warmed up, but Karpov defeated Rukavina and for the first time became the sole leader – 11 out of 14! ‘The round-by-round movements of Korchnoi and Karpov resemble a cycle race, when two racers are ahead for the whole distance and at the same time change places, handing each other the lead in turn.’ (Kotov)

In the 15th round it was Karpov’s turn to draw – and again there were two leaders! Two rounds before the finish the battle for a place in the cherished three had become extremely sharp: Karpov and Korchnoi had 11½ points, Byrne – 11 and Smejkal – 10½. In the 16th round Korchnoi and Byrne won their games, while Karpov had Black against Smejkal, who had staggered the public with a series of seven wins in the middle of the tournament. An anxious, nervy encounter! Smejkal had a dangerous initiative, but he spent too much time in thought and in severe time-trouble he first lost his advantage, and then on the 39th move he blundered a pawn. On the resumption Karpov methodically

exploited another error by his distressed opponent and won a memorable endgame with queen and opposite-coloured bishops.

The question of the leading trio was decided: Karpov, Korchnoi and Byrne, who was half a point behind (a major triumph for the 45-year-old American grandmaster!). But who would take first place? In the last round Byrne agreed a 13-move draw with Uhlmann, and now it was all in the hands of the two 'Ks'. Both had White: Karpov against the Filipino Torre, and Korchnoi against Hübner.

Before the games Anatoly received a proposal from his rival that both games should be agreed drawn and that first place should be 'rightly' shared. 'I, of course, rejected this "Korchnoi variation", which considerably angered him,' Karpov recalls. 'The proposal was unpleasant for me: in our country such "tricks" are vigorously condemned. I won quickly against Torre and went off to analyse with him. Later Korchnoi arrived and loudly (for everyone) and maliciously (for me) announced: "Well, I was forced to win against Hübner." Now I realise: he and I would have become enemies much sooner, if he had not won that last game in the Interzonal.'

The outcome of the gripping Leningrad race was as follows: 1-2. Karpov and Korchnoi – $13\frac{1}{2}$ out of 17; 3. Byrne – $12\frac{1}{2}$; 4. Smejkal – 11; 5-6. Hübner and Larsen – 10; 7. Kuzmin – $9\frac{1}{2}$; 8-10. Gligoric, Taimanov and Tal – $8\frac{1}{2}$, etc. Incidentally, Karpov nevertheless achieved his highest aim: in the autumn, at the drawing of lots for the Candidates matches, he was arbitrarily awarded first place in the Interzonal, thanks to which he avoided a quarter-final meeting with Spassky or Petrosian and was given Polugayevsky as his opponent. But Korchnoi too did not complain of his fate, being paired against Mecking, the winner of the other Interzonal tournament in Brazil.

It is amusing that Mecking announced that summer: 'Only Karpov and I can take the title of world champion from Fischer!' On learning of this, Karpov thought: 'Indeed, it wouldn't be bad to meet Mecking in the final Candidates match ... But this was improbable. I thought that we were both still rather too inexperienced to get through to the final match. All the major international tournaments that I had played up till then could be counted on the fingers of one hand, and this, of course, was very little to be a real contender for the title of world champion. It was more realistic to pin my hopes on the next three-year cycle. This is why I said to journalists: "This is not my cycle." '

At that time Korchnoi also gave a forecast of the forthcoming events at the chess summit, which as usual was very interesting from the professional point of view:

‘It is unlikely that I will be able to win the Candidates event. Among my rivals there are some “awkward” opponents. In general I think that the generation defeated by Fischer can no longer successfully oppose him. This is a task for the young. Can Karpov cope with it? I don’t know. Karpov’s last few appearances have shown that, as a tournament fighter, he is not inferior to Fischer ... Karpov is improving from one tournament to the next. In one of my statements I said that in this cycle no one would be able to win against Fischer. For this Karpov has as yet insufficient experience and knowledge. Perhaps he believed me and therefore he stated that this is “not his cycle”? But in the Interzonal tournament he fought for the highest place and played more maturely than previously. Karpov is becoming a great tournament fighter, taking risks when necessary, and capable of playing for a win in every game. At the same time he is very practical and does not make any bad mistakes. His play now resembles that of Spassky in his best years – composure in every encounter, evenness in all stages of the game, and a lack of obvious errors.’

Literally a week after the tournament, Korchnoi and Karpov were already playing for the USSR team in the European Team Championship (Bath, July 1973), where Anatoly scored the best result on board four (+4=2). The next test was the 41st USSR Championship (Moscow, October 1973), the strongest for many years: 1. Spassky – 11½ out of 17; 2-6. Karpov, Korchnoi, Kuzmin, Petrosian and Polugayevsky – 10½; behind them Geller, Keres, Taimanov, Tal, Tukmakov, Smyslov etc.

‘For the first time I set my sights on the title of USSR Champion: my consistent and good results had given me the right to such an aim,’ Karpov recalls. ‘But I was prevented from taking first place by a certain ambivalence. On the one hand, I wanted to win the championship, but on the other hand it was impossible to “open up” completely, since looming ahead was the quarter-final Candidates match with Polugayevsky. It was necessary to economise on my strength and my openings.’

This was Tal’s opinion: ‘Karpov made this tournament into a kind of training ground. The young grandmaster has frequently been reproached for his insufficiently broad opening repertoire (similar claims

were made about Fischer in 1970-71). I think that in a number of games in this championship the Leningrad grandmaster deliberately went in for unfamiliar set-ups, trying to master them, so to speak, while in motion, and this was the direction he pursued, endeavouring not to be diverted from his set program.'

And another important observation by Karpov: 'By, contrast, Spassky peddled furiously. He played flat-out, not saving any theoretical discoveries for the Candidates matches, and generously revealing his plans in a number of variations, admitting that before the Candidates matches he had to experience his strength. But I think that Spassky's victory in the championship was not really so convincing and promising for him. The ex-world champion had a losing position against me, he could have lost by force to Korchnoi, and he had a difficult position against Kuzmin ... Had he lost to any of us, the winner would have shared first place with him.' An uncommonly sober assessment of the play of a dangerous future opponent, whose triumph in the national championship provoked general admiration!

The last stage of his preparations for the match with Polugayevsky was a tournament in Madrid (November-December 1973), where Anatoly played together with Furman: 'Botvinnik was against me making this journey. He thought that the better I performed in Madrid, the worse things would be for me in the Candidates matches. I was of a different opinion. And I wasn't mistaken.'

The young challenger started with 2½ out of 3 (wins over Pomar and Andersson), but then made a series of draws: 'I played, so to speak, on technique, without especially giving my all'. Four rounds before the finish the sole lead has been assumed by Uhlmann – 8½ out of 11, and behind him were Karpov, Furman, Tukmakov and Hort on 7½. In this situation there is no need to explain the competitive importance of the following game with the experienced German grandmaster.

Game 53

A.Karpov-W.Uhlmann

Madrid 1973, 12th round

French Defence C09

1 e4 e6 (of course: Uhlmann is one of the greatest experts on the French Defence) 2 d4 d5 3 Nd2 c5 4 exd5 exd5

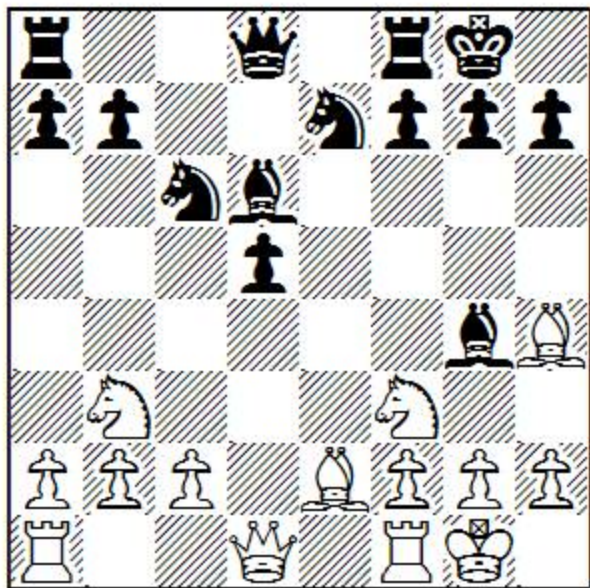
By present-day standards, it is hard for White to play for a win in this variation. And even Karpov, for all his amazing skill in accumulating small pluses and transforming them into a more substantial advantage, would hardly have achieved such successes without the 'help' of his opponents. But these mistakes, as in the present game, were sometimes so imperceptible, that it was possible to find them only after a scrupulous analysis.

5 Ngf3 Nc6 6 Bb5 Bd6 7 dxc5 Bxc5 8 0-0 Nge7 9 Nb3 Bd6 10 Bg5 0-0 11 Bh4

The time for 11 Re1! (Karpov-Korchnoi, 18th matchgame, Moscow 1974) had not yet come.

11 ... Bg4 (as already mentioned, 11 ... Qb6! is better, but not 11 ... Qc7?! – *Game No.52*) 12 Be2!

An excellent idea of Gennady Kuzmin.



12 ... Bh5

An attempt to improve Black's play compared with the game Kuzmin-Uhlmann (Leningrad Interzonal 1973), which went 12 ... Qb6 13 Bxe7! (an unpleasant surprise: over his reply Black thought for an hour and twenty minutes!) 13 ... Nxe7 (after 13 ... Bxe7 14 Qxd5 it is not easy to find worthwhile compensation for the pawn) 14 Qd4 Qxd4 15 Nfxd4 Bd7 (15 ... Bxe2 16 Nxe2 is no better) 16 Rad1 Rfd8 17 Rfe1 Kf8 18 c3 a5?! 19 a3 a4 20 Na1! Nc8 21 Nac2 Nb6 22 Ne3 Bf4 23 Ndc2 Be6 24 Rd4! Bxe3 25 Nxe3 Nc4 26 Red1! Rdc8 27 Nxd5 Bxd5

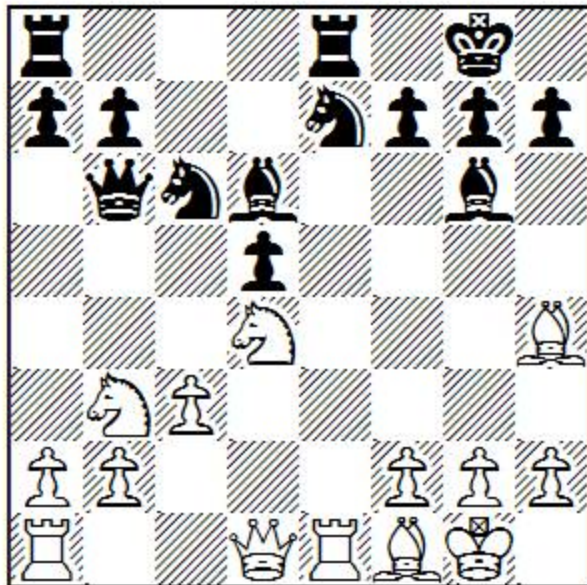
28 Rxd5 Nxb2 29 Rb1 Nc4 30 Rxb7 Na5 (30 ... Nxa3? 31 Rdd7) 31 Rbb5, and White converted his extra pawn.

But Karpov also parries Uhlmann's new move. In the end it was these failures by Black that induced him to seek new ways of defending against 11 Bh4.

13 Re1 Qb6 14 Nfd4

'After releasing his knight at e7 from the pin, Black was intending to use it to attack the bishop at h4, and so White needs to control the f5-square.' (Karpov)

14 ... Bg6 (to establish control over the central squares) **15 c3 Rfe8 16 Bf1**



16 ... Be4

Vacating the g6-square for the manoeuvre ... Ng6-e5. Going into the endgame by 16 ... Nxd4 17 Qxd4 Nf5 18 Qxb6 axb6 19 Rxe8+ Rxe8 would not have given full equality in view of 20 Bb5! Ra8 (20 ... Re5?! 21 Bd8) 21 Bg3! (not 21 Bg5 h6 22 Bd2 Be5 with equality) 21 ... Bxg3 (or 21 ... Nxg3 22 hxg3) 22 hxg3 Nd6 23 Nd4, and in view of the weakness of his pawns, Black's position is somewhat worse.

17 Bg3 Bxg3 18 hxg3 a5?!

'Uhlmann must have underestimated the dangers facing him, otherwise he would have restricted himself to the simple 18 ... Rad8,' (Karpov), for example: 19 a4 Nxd4 20 Nxd4 a6 etc.

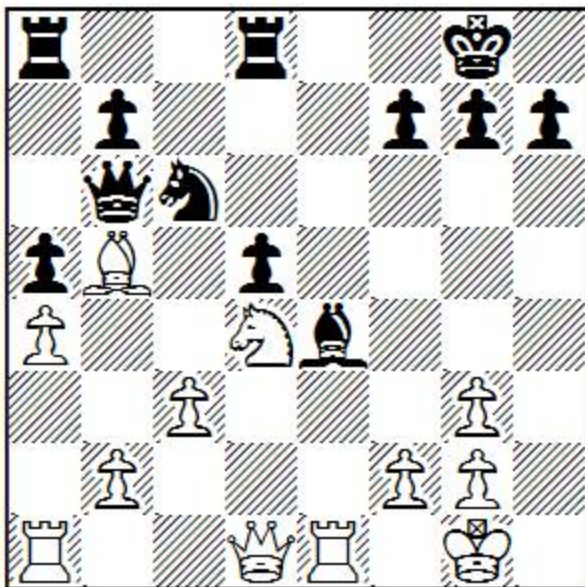
19 a4!

The b5-square becomes an important strong point for the white pieces, and Karpov makes uncommonly effective use of this outpost.

19 ... Nxd4 20 Nxd4! (the only possibility of playing for an advantage) **20 ... Nc6**

20 ... Qxb2? is not possible on account of **21 Nb5**, with two unpleasant threats – **Nc7** and **Re2!** Black is forced to allow the activation of the knight at b3, and his entire strategy, based on the restraining role of the queen at b6, proves worthless.

21 Bb5 Red8



22 g4!

The aim of this advance does not immediately become clear. White is not thinking about an attack – he is preparing for the endgame!

‘Such moves afford me the greatest satisfaction: White succeeds in seeing into the future. And in the immediate future the game transposes into a double-rook ending with light-squared bishops. The mobility of the black bishop is restricted by its own pawn at d5, and now my pawn at g4 will cramp it still further. It may be objected: but you are placing a pawn on a square of the colour of your own bishop! This is indeed so, but my bishop is working along different diagonals.’ (Karpov)

22 ... Nxd4?

Karpov's judgement, which is of methodological value, could have encountered serious counter-arguments, if Black had not hurried with exchanges, but followed Karpov's own recommendation: 'The preparatory 22 ... Rac8 would have been technically better.'

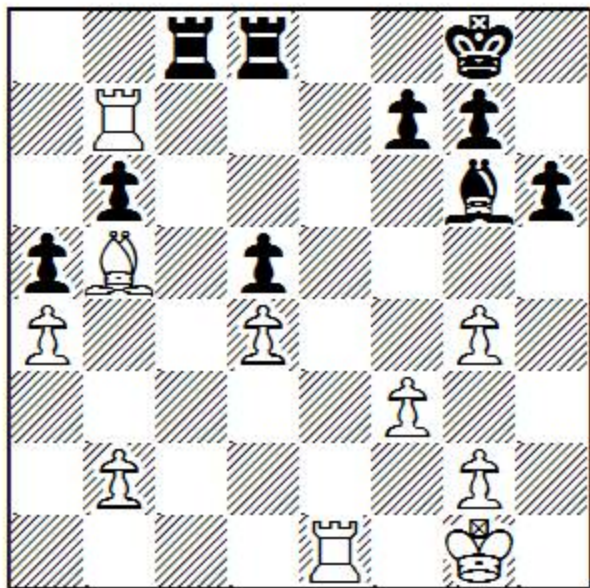
It would appear that in this way he could have maintained approximate equality: 23 Nf5 (23 f3 Bg6) 23 ... Bxf5 24 gxf5 d4! 25 Qg4 Na7 26 Bf1 Qf6, or 23 Rc1 Nxd4 24 Qxd4 Qxd4 25 cxd4 Kf8 with good drawing chances.

23 Qxd4! Qxd4 24 cxd4 Rac8 25 f3 Bg6 26 Re7! b6

According to Karpov, 'It was probably time to decide on active measures with 26 ... Rc2.' However, after 27 Rae1! (not immediately 27 Rxb7 Rxb2 28 Ra7 Rd2 29 Rxa5 Rxd4 30 Ra7 Rb4 with a probable draw) 27 ... h6 28 Rxb7! Rxb2 29 Ree7 Black would have faced a difficult defence: 29 ... Rc8!? (29 ... Rd2 30 Be8!, while if 29 ... Rb4, then 30 f4 is unpleasant) 30 Kh2! Rcc2 31 Kg3 Rxc2+ 32 Kf4 Kh7 33 Rbd7 and Rxd5, retaining the advantage.

27 Rae1 h6 28 Rb7

White is threatening to invade the 7th rank with his second rook and to begin pursuing the king.



28 ... Rd6?

Practically shutting the rook out of the game – and this is sufficient for Karpov to win. He does not fear the invasion of the other rook: on its

own, or even with the support of the bishop, it can only give a few checks, pick up a couple of pawns, whereas the united pair of white rooks will weave a mating net.

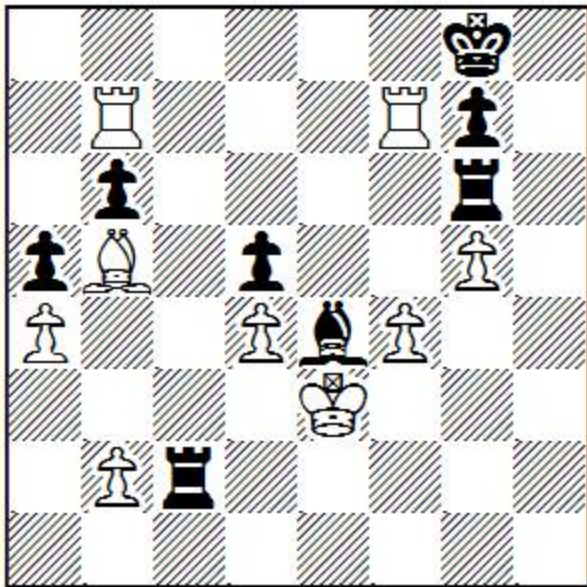
'If now 28 ... Rc2, then very unpleasant for Black is 29 Re2 Rxe2 30 Bxe2 Rd6 31 Bb5 followed by the advance of White's king to the centre, which enables him to achieve domination despite the limited material.' (Karpov). But it seems to me that this variation would leave Black real saving chances: 31 ... Kf8 32 Kf2 Bc2 33 Rc7 Bh7 34 Ke3 g5!, blocking the king's path to the centre. It is not apparent how White can breach this fortress.

I should add that after the only move 28 ... Rc2! Black would also have retained defensive resources in the event of 29 Rxb6 Rxb2 30 Ra6 Rd2 31 Rxa5 Rxd4, or 29 Ree7 Rxb2 30 Be8 Rd6! 31 f4 Be4 32 Bxf7+ Kh7 (for example, 33 Bh5 Rc6! 34 Rxg7+ Kh8 35 Rgc7 Rxc7 36 Rxc7 Rxg2+ 37 Kf1 Ra2 38 Rc6 Rxa4 39 Rxh6+ Kg7 40 Rxb6 Rxd4 etc.).

29 Ree7 h5

29 ... Rc2 was now too late in view of 30 Rb8+ Kh7 31 Ree8 Rc1+ 32 Kh2 Bb1 33 f4 Be4? 34 f5 g6 35 f6! g5 36 Rg8! Rxf6 37 Rh8+ Kg7 38 Rbg8 mate. 'Black could have avoided all this "brilliancy" only by 33 ... Kg6, which would have forced me also to operate more prosaically.' (Karpov). That is, 34 Re7! (with the threat of Rbb7 or Rf8) 34 ... Rf6 35 Kg3 Rd1 (35 ... h5 36 gxh5+ Kxh5 37 Re5+ and Rxd5) 36 f5+ Kg5 37 Rg8 g6 38 Rxf7! Rxd4 39 Be2, and Black's days are numbered.

30 gxh5 Bxh5 31 g4! Bg6 32 f4 Rc1+ 33 Kf2 Rc2+ 34 Ke3 Be4 (34 ... Re6+ 35 Rxe6 fxe6 36 Rxb6 is also bad for Black) 35 Rxf7 Rg6 36 g5



One black rook is rushing about uselessly in the enemy position, while the other is still out of play ... The rest is clear without words.

36 ... Kh7 37 Rfe7 Rxb2 38 Be8! Rb3+ 39 Ke2 Rb2+ 40 Ke1! Rd6 (40 ... Rb1+ 41 Kd2 Rb2+ 42 Kc3 Rc2+ 43 Kb3 Karpov) 41 Rxc7+ Kh8 42 Rge7 1-0

Or 42 Rgf7 Kg8 43 f5. Black resigned, since the only way to avoid mate was by the hopeless 42 ... Rb1+ 43 Kf2 Rb2+ 44 Kg3 Rg2+ 45 Kh3 Re2 46 Bb5! Bf5+ 47 Kg3 Rxe7 48 Rxe7 etc.

An excellent finish – 3½ out of 4, including a win with Black in the last round, enabled the 22-year-old Soviet grandmaster to become the sole winner for the first time of a major international tournament: 1. Karpov – 11 out of 15; 2. Tukmakov – 10½; 3. Furman – 10; 4-5. Hort and Uhlmann – 9½; 6-7. Andersson and Portisch – 9, etc. At the closing ceremony, together with the first prize he also received his first chess ‘Oscar’. Symptomatic, wouldn’t you agree? Before that the ‘Oscar’ had been won only by Spassky (1968 and 1969) and Fischer (1970, 1971 and 1972).

Of course, Fischer continued to observe the rise of the new star with unremitting attention, studying the style and habits of his potential opponent. Highly eloquent is the testimony of Tal, who together with Karpov gave simultaneous displays at the world youth and students’ festival in Berlin in the summer of 1973:

‘After one of the displays the organisers drew our attention to a youthful-looking woman, who all the time had been beside Karpov’s boards with a camera in her hands. It turned out to be the mother of Robert Fischer. At the request of her son, she had taken a few photographs. The world champion wanted to get to know Karpov a little better, since he thought that he would be his opponent in the 1975 world championship match. I have to admit that at the time I found this hard to believe, but Fischer proved more far-sighted ... ’

Duel of the Debutants

Karpov’s first opponent in the Candidates matches – the 39-year-old Lev Polugayevsky, twice USSR Champion and the winner of many international tournaments – was also making his debut in competitions at such a high level. However, in contrast to Karpov, he did have some match experience: two matches for the title of USSR Champion (with Alexander Zaitsev and Petrosian) and the clash with Hort in the ‘Match of the Century’. Even so, according to Tal, most of the experts predicted victory for the younger contestant, but ... after a very tough struggle.

Polugayevsky himself rated his own chances rather modestly, but he prepared with all his might: ‘I was not particularly happy about the opponent who had “fallen” to me. Although Karpov had said that it was not yet “his” Candidates cycle, his amazing successes and his enormous talent, gathering strength with every day, demonstrated that in the chess world he was an exceptional phenomenon. Perhaps it was for this reason that my attitude to the match was excessively serious. Leaving myself practically no time for relaxation, I devoted all my time to opening preparation. (Later I endeavoured to avoid this mistake.) I knew that Karpov never declined a theoretical duel, since he believed in himself, his analysis, and his ability to solve the most unexpected problems at the board. And I decided to spring a surprise on him: as Black to play “my” Sicilian schemes, but as White – instead of my favourite 1 c4 to switch to 1 d4, and to battle in the main variation of the Nimzo-Indian Defence, which was firmly established in Karpov’s repertoire.’

A curious touch: ‘When Polugayevsky was preparing for the match with Karpov he looked through about 250 of his games, and found much in common between Karpov and Fischer. In the opening they both play “straight chess”. What did Polugayevsky imply by this

definition? Both Fischer and Karpov are ready to engage in a critical theoretical dispute, since they believe in the correctness of their opening approach – they usually employ only continuations that have been carefully considered and analysed in variations selected beforehand. At the same time the technique of Fischer and Karpov is exceptionally fine, and it is hard to find flaws in it, although they probably play more quickly than all the other strongest grandmasters.’ (Roshal)

Karpov also had his match strategy: ‘In Furman’s opinion, before the match with Polugayevsky I already had a sufficiently deep, although perhaps not particularly extensive knowledge of the openings. Our “plan of campaign” was briefly as follows: Polugayevsky likes positions of a calculating nature – don’t allow him to obtain them on the board. The narrowness of the opponent’s opening repertoire simplified our task.’

As a result, in this match – uniquely of all the quarter-finals – the theoretical discussion took place in only two variations: a popular line of the Najdorf Variation in the Sicilian (6 Be2 e5 7 Nb3 Be7 8 0-0 Be6 9 f4 Qc7 10 a4 Nbd7 11 Kh1) and the Nimzo-Indian Defence (4 e3 0-0 5 Bd3 c5 6 Nf3 d5 7 0-0 dxc4 8 Bxc4 Nc6 9 a3 Ba5). And although familiar middlegame positions arose, serious thought by the two players, sometimes leading to dubious decisions, began already in the opening. Well, this was the pre-computer era, when home analysis of the early middlegame, with rare outstanding exceptions, was largely of an illustrative character. Nevertheless, this ‘heavyweight battle’ enabled a number of typical positions in the Sicilian Defence to be looked at anew and made a valuable contribution to its theory.

In the early stages of the match (Moscow, January-February 1974) there was a difficult, equal struggle: the first three games ended in draws. By the new FIDE rules, adopted under the influence of Fischer, they now played to a definite number of wins; in the quarter-final – to three (but not more than 16 games).

Botvinnik: ‘At first, Karpov did not appreciate where his opponent’s weaknesses were. But he employed one of the strongest features of his nature – his self-education program, and he reorganised himself. The point is that Polugayevsky is strong when he knows what has to be done. But when the plan is not clear, and the game drags out, Polugayevsky is weaker. After the 4th game Karpov gained in confidence.’

Game 54

A.Karpov-L.Polugayevsky

Candidates Match, Moscow 1974, 4th game

Sicilian Defence B92

1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Nf6 5 Nc3 a6 6 Be2

Karpov's favourite move. 'This quiet continuation seems to me to be one of the most solid replies to the Najdorf Variation. It normally requires Black to take independent positional decisions at the board, whereas in sharp variations the two sides act for a long time in accordance with the prescriptions of others, and even for a skilled player it can be difficult to work things out, when home analysis comes to an end.'

6 ... e5

In my matches with Karpov (1984/85 and 1985) and Anand (1995) the only topic of discussion was the flexible Scheveningen Variation, arising after 6 ... e6 (see Volume 7).

7 Nb3 Be7 8 0-0 Be6

First 8 ... 0-0 is slightly more accurate, and if 9 Be3, only now 9 ... Be6!, but not 9 ... Qc7?! (Geller-Fischer, Curaçao Candidates 1962, 2nd round). The notes to this game also describe the subtleties of the entire variation (cf. *Volume 2, Game No.98*).

9 f4 Qc7 10 a4

Later various moves were employed against me: 10 f5 Bc4 11 Bg5 (Oll, Moscow Olympiad 1994), 10 Nd5 (Anand, Linares 2000), and the most aggressive 10 g4!? (Ye Jiangchuan, Batumi rapidplay 2001).

10 ... Nbd7 11 Kh1!?

Geller's new move. As in the 2nd game, White avoids the traditional 11 f5 Bc4 and what was once the main continuation, but now is no longer topical: 12 Be3 0-0 13 a5 b5! 14 axb6 Nxb6 (*Volume 4, Game No.70*), as well as the unsuccessful attempt 12 a5 0-0 13 Bg5 Rfc8 14 Bxc4 Qxc4 with equality (Karpov-Gheorghiu, Moscow 1971).

11 ... 0-0

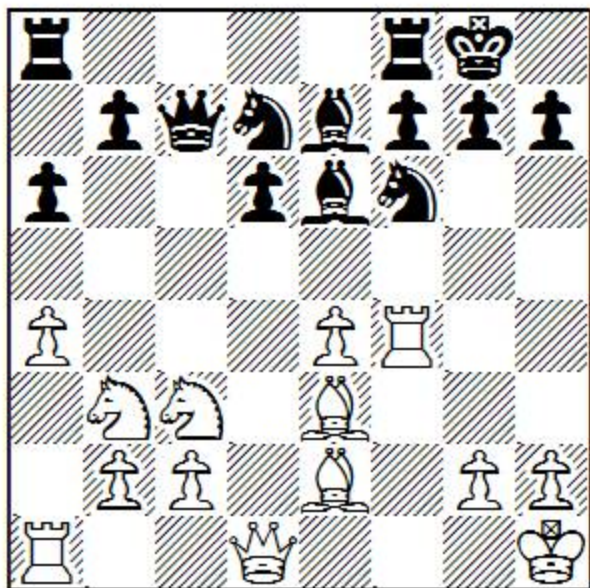
Of course, not 11 ... Rc8?! 12 f5 Bc4 13 a5 0-0 14 Bxc4 Qxc4 15 Ra4! Qc6 16 Be3 with a bind (Geller-Ivkov, Hilversum 1973), since after 16 ... b5? 17 axb6 the a6-pawn is en prise.

12 Be3

At that time the bold thrust 12 g4!? had not occurred to anyone – apparently it was first played in the game Korsunsky-Kasparov (Baku 1976).

In addition, it was not yet too late to play 12 f5 Bc4 and now either 13 a5 with the idea of 13 ... b5 14 axb6 Nxb6 15 Bg5 – although then 15 ... d5!? is not bad, or, even earlier, 13 ... Bb5!? 14 Nxb5 axb5 15 Bg5 b4 16 Bd3 Nc5 (Ivkov-Mecking, Petropolis Interzonal 1973), or 13 Bg5 Rfc8 14 a5 h6, transposing into a position from the Oll-Kasparov game (for more details – cf. *Volume 4, Game No.70*, note to White's 12th move).

12 ... exf4 13 Rxf4



13 ... Ne5!?

A novelty. The 2nd game went 13 ... Rfe8 14 Nd4 (14 a5 is questionable: 14 ... Bxb3 15 cxb3 d5! 16 exd5 Bc5! Tringov-Browne, Nice Olympiad 1974) 14 ... Ne5 15 Nf5 Ng6 16 Rf1 Bf8 17 Qd4 (17 Bd4 was also recommended, but after 17 ... Ne5 Black is alright), and it was generally considered that White gained a positional advantage.

However, Polugayevsky, Botvinnik and other commentators overlooked the typical counter 17 ... d5!, which gives Black a good game: 18 Nxd5 (18 Nh6+ gxh6 19 Qxf6 Bg7 or 19 Rxf6 dxe4 is worse for White) 18 ... Nxd5 19 exd5 Bxf5 20 Rxf5 Qe7 21 Rf3 Nh4 22 Rh3

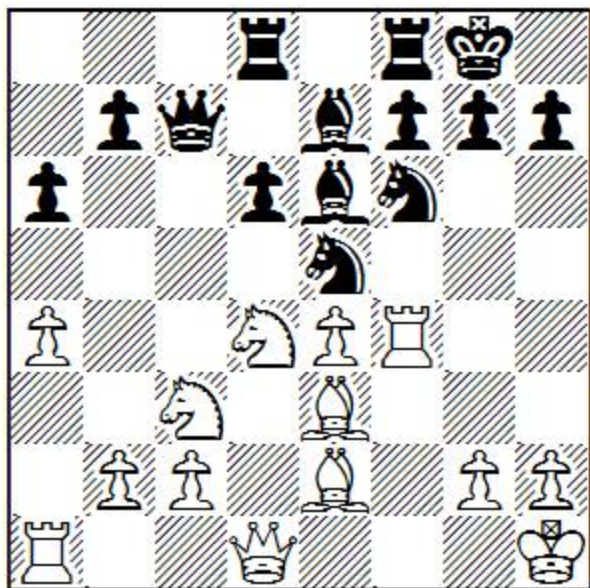
Nf5 23 Qd3 g6, or 18 exd5 Bxf5 19 Rxf5 Bd6! 20 Bg5 Be5 21 Qc4 Qb6 etc.

14 Nd4

14 a5! is more accurate (*Game Nos.56 and 57*), but not 14 Nd5 Bxd5 15 exd5 Nfd7 16 Rb4 Rfe8 17 a5 Bf6 with equality (Hulak-Portisch, Indonesia 1983).

14 ... Rad8!

An idea which involves an original arrangement of the forces. The standard 14 ... Rac8 is also suitable, for example: 15 Nf5 Bxf5 16 exf5 d5! 17 Nxd5 Nxd5 18 Qxd5 Rfd8 19 Qe4 Re8 with adequate counterplay (R.Byrne-Portisch, Las Palmas 1976).



15 Qg1?!

The first comparatively long think (10 minutes) produces not the best reaction to the novelty – Karpov himself has spoken many times about the need to choose carefully a post for the queen, but here he voluntarily places it in a corner.

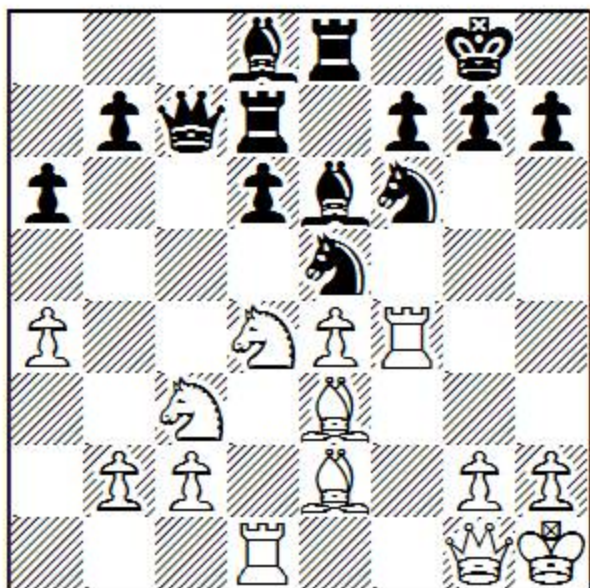
Little is also promised by 15 Nf5 Bxf5 16 Rxf5 Qc8! 17 Qf1 Qe6 18 Rd1 Rc8 19 Bd4 Bd8! (Adorjan-Portisch, Hungarian Championship 1975). The most advisable move was the one recommended by many commentators: 15 a5 (with the same threat of Nxe6 and Bb6), although after 15 ... Rd7 16 Nf5 Bd8 17 Nd5 Nxd5 18 exd5 Bxf5 19 Rxf5 (Botvinnik) 19 ... Re8 there is no question of any advantage for White.

15 ... Rd7 16 Rd1 Re8 17 Nf5?! (it was safer to play 17 Nxe6 fxe6 18 Bb6 Qc6 19 Qe3 Bd8 with equality) 17 ... **Bd8!**

This is the set-up devised by Polugayevsky: he has everything defended, and there is nothing for White to attack!

18 Nd4

After 25 minutes' thought Karpov admits that his previous move was pointless. If 18 Bd4 there would have followed the freeing 18 ... d5! 19 exd5 Nxd5 20 Nxd5 Bxd5 with the initiative for Black.



18 ... Ng6?!

Missing an excellent chance to emphasise the uncertainty of White's play in the opening -18 ... Bc4! (Polugayevsky), and after ... d6-d5 it transpires that Black is far better prepared for the opening of the centre.

19 Rff1 Ne5 (played after almost 20 minutes' hesitation) **20 Bf4!?**

Karpov promptly exploits his opponent's indecision, opening a path for his queen. Polugayevsky suggested the prophylactic 20 h3!? (depriving Black of the g4-square), but here too after 20 ... Qc8 or 20 ... Bc4 the chances are equal.

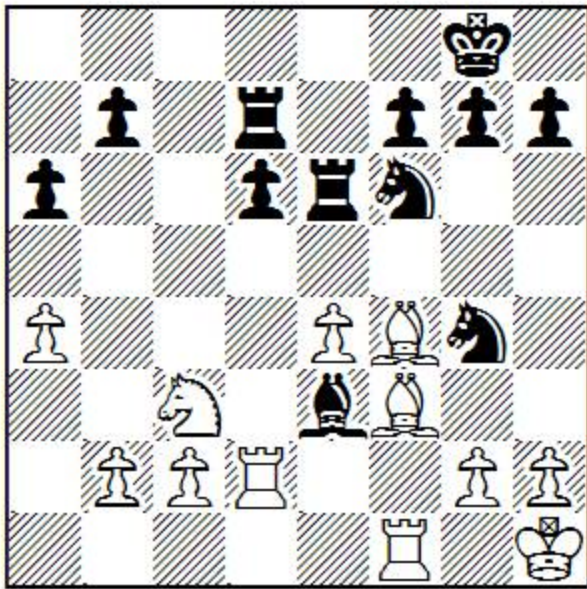
20 ... Qc5

Inviting the opponent to go into a roughly equal ending. 20 ... Qa5 (Polugayevsky) or 20 ... Bc4!? would have led to more complicated play.

21 Nxe6 Qxg1+ 22 Rxxg1 Rxe6 23 Bf3

Firmly defending the weakness at e4, even at the cost of transforming his bishop into a 'large pawn'! After 23 Rgf1!? Black had a choice between the quiet 23 ... h6 and the immediate attack on the e4-pawn by 23 ... Ng6 (but not immediately 23 ... Ba5?! on account of 24 Nd5! Nxe4? 25 b4! Bd8 26 Bxe5 and Bg4) 24 Bg3 Ba5 (threatening ... Bxc3) 25 Nd5 Rxe4 26 Bd3 Nxd5! 27 Bxe4 Ne3, gaining a draw.

23 ... Neg4 24 Rgf1 Bb6 25 Rd2 Be3 (25 ... Ba5!? would also have secured comfortable equality)



26 Bxe3?

Playing with fire! Karpov does not want to exchange his 'stupid' bishop, as though anticipating that it may yet distinguish itself! After 26 Bxg4 Nxg4 27 Bxe3 Nxe3 28 Rf3 Nc4 29 Rd4! Ne5 (not 29 ... Nxb2? 30 Nd5, and the black knight is trapped) complete calm would have descended on the board and peace could have been concluded.

According to eye-witnesses, many of the experts in the press centre were puzzled as to why, after his insipidly played opening, Karpov avoided opportunities to force a draw, and only Balashov, who knew him well, calmly remarked: 'What does he want with a draw? For a long time now he's been playing for a win.' Obviously, in the given instance the grandmaster was evaluating not the position (it is now clearly more promising for Black), but the psychological mood of the two opponents.

26 ... Nxe3 27 Rb1 Kf8

This obvious move was made quickly. The sharper 27 ... g5!? also came into consideration (Polugayevsky).

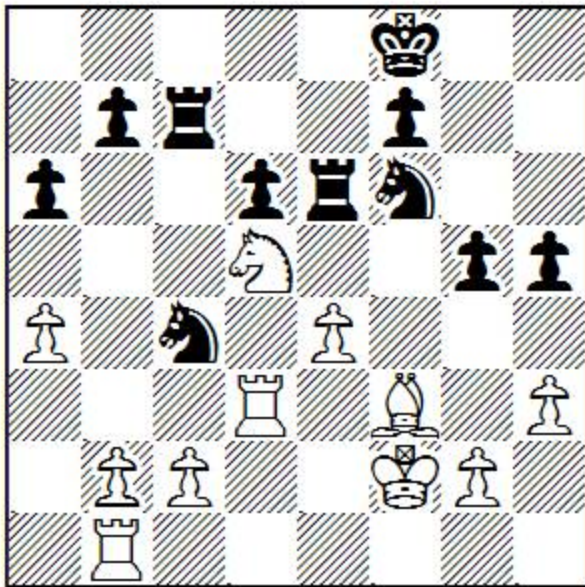
28 Kg1 Rc7 29 Kf2

Polugayevsky's recommendation 29 Re2 Nc4 30 Nd1 is inadequate on account of 30 ... d5 (Botvinnik) 31 exd5 Rxe2 32 Bxe2 Nxd5 or, even more unpleasant, 30 ... g5! 31 Nf2 h5.

29 ... Nc4 30 Rd3 g5!

Finally deciding to display some activity. 'Many thought that the manoeuvre ... Re5-c5 would have given Black good winning chances. Nevertheless, it would seem that after 30 ... Re5 31 b3! Na3 32 Rb2! Rec5 33 Ne2 White could have drawn.' (Botvinnik). That is, 33 ... Nxc2 34 Rxd6 Ke7 35 Rd1 etc.

31 h3 h5 32 Nd5



Here Polugayevsky was already in time-trouble and such was his emotional state that he contrived, without leaving a single piece or pawn en prise, to lose this excellent position within eight moves!

32 ... Nxd5

The start of the turning point. Black dreams of creating a fortress, not even thinking about winning. 32 ... Rc5! was stronger (32 ... Rc6!? was also not bad), and according to Botvinnik it would have 'kept a slight advantage', but in my opinion it would also have given chances of

more: 33 Nxf6?! Rxf6 34 Kg3 (34 Ke2? Ne5) 34 ... h4+ 35 Kf2 Nb6! winning a pawn (Polugayevsky), or 33 b4 Rc8 34 Kg1! (34 Rc3? g4 and wins) 34 ... Ne5 35 Rc3 Rxc3 36 Nxc3 Re8! 37 Be2 Rc8 38 Rb3 Nc6!? (apparently, not the only way) 39 Bd3 Nd4 40 Ra3 Nd7, and White faces an unpleasant defence.

33 Rxd5! Ne5?

The first step towards the abyss. After 33 ... Rf6! Black would still have retained the advantage: 34 Rxg5 (34 Kg1 Ne5) 34 ... Nd2 35 Re1 Rxc2 36 Kg3 h4+! 37 Kg4 Rxb2, or 34 Rf5 Rxf5 35 exf5 Nd2 36 Rd1 (36 Rc1 Nxf3 37 Kxf3 Rc4!) 36 ... Nxf3 37 Kxf3 Rxc2 38 Rxd6 Rxb2, and White has to try and gain a draw in a rook endgame where he is a pawn down (39 f6 Ke8 40 Rd5 Rb6 41 Rxg5 Rxf6+ 42 Ke4 Rg6 43 Rxh5 Rxg2 etc.).

34 c3 h4

Another tiny concession. 34 ... Rf6 (Polugayevsky) 35 Ke3 g4 36 Be2 Ke7 was better, with equality.

35 Rbd1 Ke7 36 R1d4!

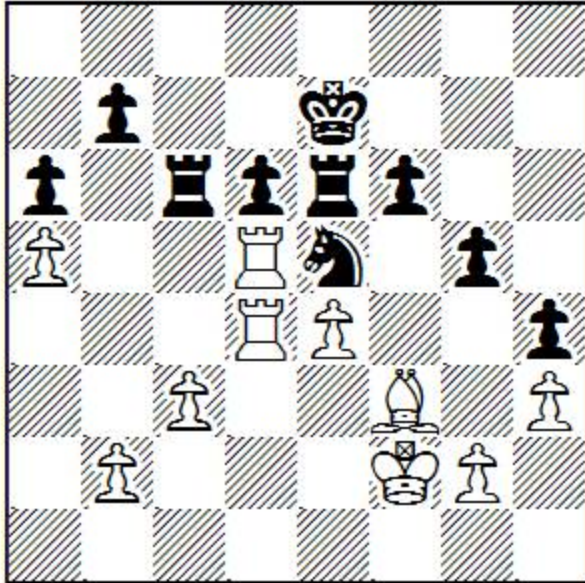
White strengthens the placing of his pieces as much as possible, but as yet it is still early to talk about any advantage for him.

36 ... f6?!

Shutting in his own rook at e6, which, of course, should have been left with scope to move. In Botvinnik's opinion, after 36 ... b6 37 Rb4 Rc6 38 Be2 a5! 39 Rb3 Kd8 Black would have had no difficulties. 36 ... Rf6 was also not bad (but not Polugayevsky's recommendation 36 ... Rg6 on account of 37 Be2!), but the best was 36 ... Rc5! – here it is only White who could have had any problems: 37 Be2 Rxd5 38 Rxd5 Nd7! 39 Rxg5 Nc5, and after 40 Rg4 Nxe4+ 41 Kf3 Nd2+ 42 Kf2 Ne4+ the result is a draw.

37 a5! (an important link in Karpov's still far from obvious plan) 37 ... **Rc6**

37 ... Nc4?! was a blank shot in view of 38 Be2! (38 ... Nxb2? 39 Rb4).



38 Be2!

‘White ignores the possibility of 38 Rb4, forcing the retreat 38 ... Rc7, and prepares the advance of his queenside pawns.’ (Botvinnik)

38 ... Kd8

Another impetuous time-trouble move. To his misfortune, Polugayevsky takes his king to c7 for the defence of the d6- and b7-pawns: but in freeing his rook at e6, he shuts in his other rook! ‘With 38 ... Ng6 39 Rb4 Rc7 followed by ... Re5 Black could have hindered the opponent’s plan and consolidated his position.’ (Botvinnik). 38 ... b5!? 39 axb6 Rxb6 40 b4 Rc6 was also acceptable, for example: 41 c4 Rc7! 42 b5 a5, or 41 Ra5 Rxc3 42 Rxa6 Rc2 43 Ra7+ Kd8 44 b5 Nd7 45 Ke3 f5 with equality.

39 c4 Kc7?

A fatal error with the flag about to fall. ‘Exhausted by the endless calculation of variations (although it is well known that this does not improve confidence) and dispirited by my imperturbability, in time-trouble Polugayevsky not only squandered the enormous advantage he had gained, but also compromised his position.’ (Karpov)

By 39 ... b6! (Polugayevsky) 40 b4 bxa5 41 Rxa5 Kc7 Black would have safely emerged from time-trouble, retaining every chance of a draw. And even the ‘unprincipled’ 39 ... Ke7 40 b4 Rc7 41 b5 Rc8! would still have enabled him to stay afloat.

40 b4! Ng6

An instantaneous reply – the last move before the time control! Alas, 40 ... b6 was clearly too late on account of 41 b5 axb5 42 cxb5 Rc2 43 a6 and Rd2! But now too White creates a passed pawn and wins the game.

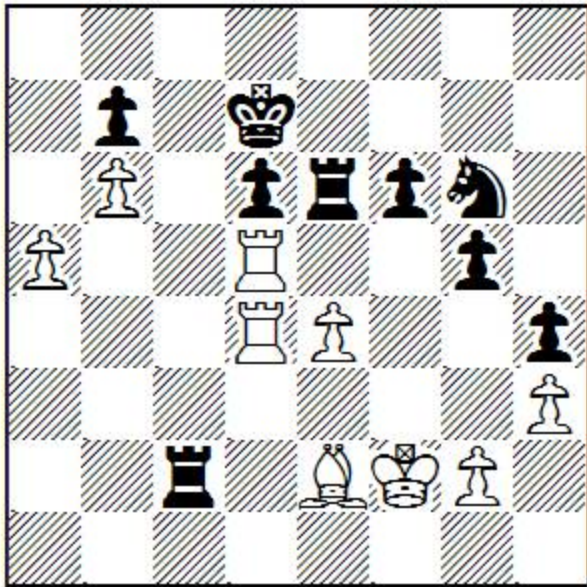
41 b5

‘The adjournment analysis of this position cannot have brought Black any comfort.’ (Botvinnik)

The following day, in the words of Roshal, Karpov arrived for the resumption 'tired and underslept, not having managed either to sleep or to have a bite to eat during the night-time analysis ... ' It goes without saying – this is a familiar picture!

41 ... axb5 (41 ... Rc5? 42 b6+ Kc6 43 Bd1 or 43 Bh5 was completely bad) 42 cxb5 Rc2 43 b6+ Kd7

If 43 ... Kc6, then 44 Ke3 (Polugayevsky), for example: 44 ... Rxe4+ 45 Rxe4 Kxd5 46 a6!, or 44 ... Rc5 45 Rxc5+ dxc5 46 Rd8 Nf4 47 Rc8+ Kd7 48 Rc7+ Kd6 49 Bg4, and the curtain comes down.



44 Rd2!

A move of fearful strength. Now the main soloist becomes the previously unnoticed 'stupid' bishop, which Karpov preserved from exchange!

However, the variation 44 Ke3 Nf4 45 Bb5+! Ke7 46 a6 Nxb2+ 47 Kf3 Ne1+, which Polugayevsky considered to be drawn, would also have brought White success after 48 Kg4! Rc8 49 Rc4! Rxc4 50 axb7, or 48 ... Kf7! 49 Kh5! (but not 49 axb7?? Kg6! 50 Rd2 Rxe4 mate) 49 ... Rc8 50 Rxd6.

44 ... Rxd2 45 Rxd2 Re5

After 45 ... Rxe4 46 Bb5+ Kc8 everyone gave 47 Rc2+ Kb8 48 a6 bxa6 49 Bxa6 Re8 50 b7 Ne7 51 Re2! winning the knight, although 47 Rxd6 is simpler.

46 a6! Kc6 (or 46 ... bxa6 47 Bxa6 Ne7 48 Rb2 Nc6 49 Bb5! Polugayevsky) **47 Rb2 Nf4** (47 ... Ra5 48 Bc4 and Bd5+) **48 a7 Ra5 49 Bc4!**, and in view of the inevitable Ra2 Black resigned (1-0).

‘This was not yet the end, just the first crack. Polugayevsky was destroyed only by the following game,’ Karpov remembers. ‘Playing his own variations against him is like crossing a minefield. But that was how I handled this match: when you lose on your home ground, the pain is stronger. True, the risk was enormous, but I was not afraid to take a risk.’

In the 5th game Polugayevsky employed another novelty and quickly gained a winning position. But Karpov held on with defiant confidence, by which his opponent was literally bewitched: ‘Polugayevsky believed in my composure ... It should be said that in matches in general – somewhere around the 3rd or 4th game – you begin as though to perceive your opponent, his mood and, even perhaps his desires. Sometimes you guess his thoughts, or at least the direction in which these thoughts are working. It is probable that Polugayevsky too sensed that I was no longer at all afraid, that inwardly I had already given myself a nought and so I was absolutely calm. But he, he still had to achieve the win, and – wouldn’t you agree, it’s amusing in such a situation? – the psychological advantage as though passed to me. And this destroyed him!’

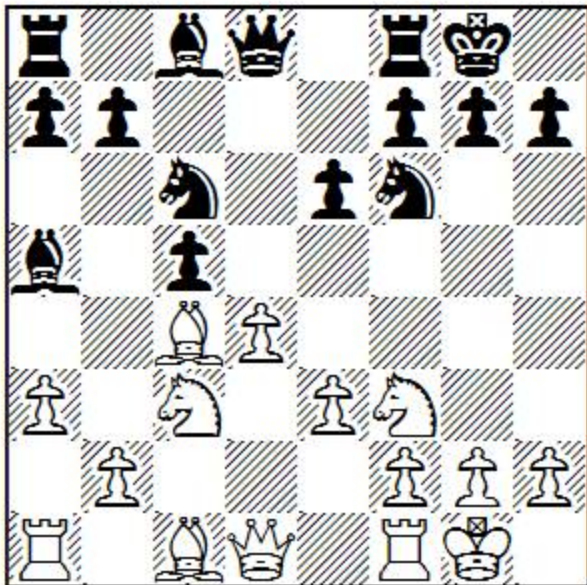
Game 55

L.Polugayevsky-A.Karpov

Candidates Match, Moscow 1974, 5th game

Nimzo-Indian Defence E56

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Bb4 4 e3 0-0 5 Bd3 c5 6 Nf3 d5 7 0-0 dxc4 8 Bxc4 Nc6 9 a3 Ba5



A rare plan (compared with 9 ... Bxc3 10 bxc3 Qc7), which had already been employed by Karpov, and before him – by Polugayevsky himself and Larsen. Black wants to retain his bishop or exchange it in under favourable circumstances.

10 Ba2

By that time 10 Qd3, the main move of the 1960s, had already gone out of fashion. The 1st game went 10 Bd3 cxd4 11 exd4 Bb6 12 Be3 Nd5, and here White employed some home preparation which was highly rated by Botvinnik: 13 Bg5!? (instead of 13 Nxd5 exd5 14 h3 Ne7 15 Bg5 f6 16 Bd2 Bf5 with equality, Gligoric-Karpov, Hastings 1971/72) 13 ... f6 14 Be3! Nce7 15 Qc2 Nxe3 16 fxe3 g6 17 Bc4 (17 Na4!?) 17 ... Nf5 18 Rfe1 Kg7 19 Rad1 with an advantage. But then Polugayevsky found some improvement for Black and he began playing 10 Ba2.

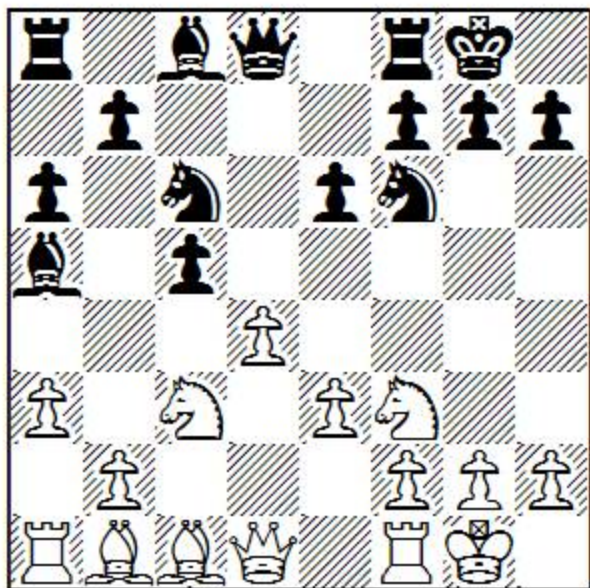
10 ... a6?!

Karpov repeats a recent game of his with Taimanov, following the principle 'leave well alone'. But the point of this move is unclear: Nb5 is not a threat, and the loss of time on the preparation of ... b7-b5 looks too great a luxury.

The 7th game went 10 ... Bb6 11 dxc5 Bxc5 12 b4 Bd6 13 Bb2 Qe7 14 Qc2 Bd7 15 Rfd1?! Ne5! 16 Ng5 Rac8 17 f4 Ng6 with equality, but by 15 Ne4! (Polugayevsky) White could have retained the advantage.

Other known equalising attempts are 10 ... cxd4 11 exd4 Bb6 12 Be3 Nd5 (Taimanov-Parma, Tbilisi 1973), or 10 ... Qe7 11 Qc2 cxd4 12 exd4 Rd8 (Donner-Unzicker, Bad Eibling 1974).

11 Bb1!



A novelty! The alternatives are weaker: 11 Ne2 cxd4 12 Nxd4 Nxd4 13 Nxd4 Bc7 14 Bd2 Bd6 15 Rc1 Bd7 16 Bb1 Rc8 (Taimanov-Karpov, 41st USSR Championship, Moscow 1973), or 11 Na4 cxd4 12 exd4 h6! 13 Bf4 Bc7 14 Bxc7 Qxc7 15 Qe2 Rd8 16 Rfd1 Bd7 17 Rac1 Be8 (3rd game), in each case with equality.

Here is Polugayevsky's commentary, dated 1981: 'When in the third game Black easily obtained an equal game, I thought to myself: is it worth going in for the same variation yet again? Is it worth 'losing' the white pieces for the sake of a theoretical argument? But nevertheless, I sensed that the truth was somewhere close at hand! And suddenly, quantity was transformed into quality – the many hours of analysis enabled me to hit upon the correct order of moves and to inflict a serious blow on the system which Karpov chose in the match, and which had been constantly played by ... me myself. White can pride himself on the move in the game. Contrary, apparently, to the unshakeable laws of chess, he moves his bishop three times in the opening, and, while still undeveloped, obtains a virtually won position.'

11 ... Bb6

The fact that Karpov spent just seven minutes on this move testifies to his particularly practical approach to the solving of unexpected opening problems. After 11 ... b5?! the simple 12 dxc5 is unpleasant, but 11 ... Qe7 came into consideration.

Sixteen years later Karpov explained the psychological motives behind his 11th and 12th moves: 'I again ran into a home preparation, and such a splendid one that, when my opponent made this move, I instantly understood: this is the end, I am unable to save the game. Without even having time to become anxious or suffer, I immediately felt that things were hopeless. But if this is so, is it worth being upset? After all, it has already happened and you can't change anything; as they say, it's no use crying over spilt milk. And I adopted a philosophical stance. Of course, it didn't occur to me to give in. I am a competitor, and as long as I have at least one chance, I will fight. Let's see, I thought, how he's going to do it.'

It is amazing that even many years later both contestants in the match considered White's position after 11 Bb1 to be virtually won. Although even without the help of a computer, relying only on common sense and simple analysis, it can be established that Black's defensive resources are still very great.

12 Qc2

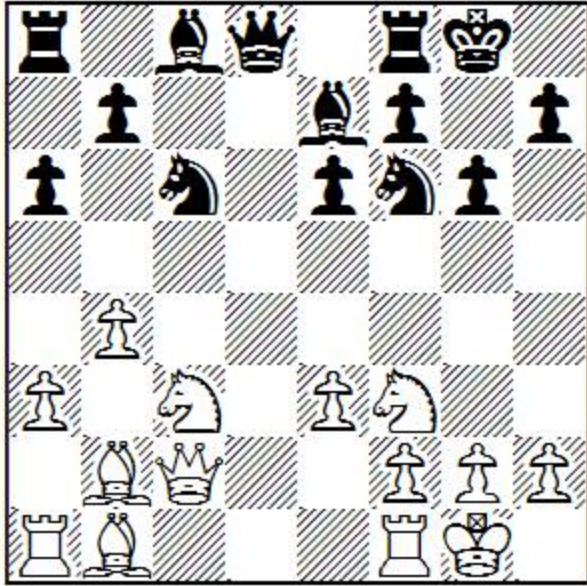
'Straightforward and very strong!' (Polugayevsky). 12 dxc5 Bxc5 13 b4 and Bb2 is also not bad (as in the 7th game – cf. the note to Black's 10th move) with a slight, but very enduring advantage for White, typical of such symmetric structures.

12 ... g6?

A fatal weakening of the long diagonal. 'This does not solve Black's defensive problems, but what is he to do?' writes Polugayevsky, giving 12 ... cxd4 13 exd4 Nxd4 (? – G.K.) 14 Nxd4 Qxd4 15 Be3 Qd6 16 Bg5 Rd8 (Botvinnik) 17 Bxf6! with a powerful attack (if 17 ... gxf6 the intermediate move 18 Rd1! is strong).

But the two players overestimated the virtues of White's position – after 13 ... h6! Black could have successfully defended, for example: 14 Rd1 (14 Be3 Ne7 or even 14 ... Nxd4!?) 14 ... Qc7 (14 ... Ne7!?) 15 Ne4 (15 d5 Ne5!) 15 ... Nxe4 16 Qxe4 f5 17 Qc2 (17 Qh4 Qe7) 17 ... Bd7 etc.

13 dxc5 Bxc5 14 b4 Be7 (14 ... Bd6 15 Rd1 Qe7 16 Bb2 also favours White) 15 Bb2



15 ... e5

'Perhaps the best practical chance (15 ... b6? 16 Ne4). Black has no convenient squares for his light-squared bishop or queen.' (Polugayevsky)

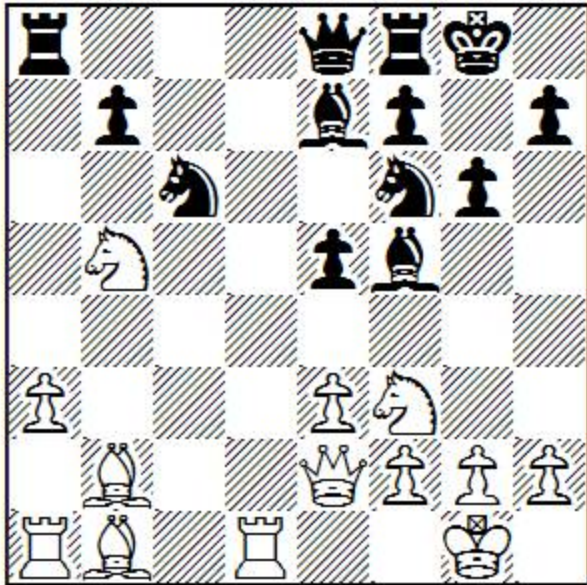
16 Rd1 Qe8

After 16 ... Qc7 Botvinnik and Polugayevsky recommended 17 Ba2 Bg4 18 Nd5 Nxd5 19 Bxd5 Rac8 20 Qe4 'with very strong pressure' and 'a decisive advantage for White', probably having in mind 20 ... Bf5 21 Qc4 Qb6 22 Qb3. It is perhaps even better to play 20 h3! Bxf3 (20 ... Bf5? 21 e4) 21 Bxf3 with an obvious advantage. And in addition – 17 e4!? and Nd5!

17 b5

'The positional approach – 17 h3, Ba2 and so on – was also possible. But I was convinced that the position was ripe for more positive measures.' (Polugayevsky)

17 ... axb5 18 Nxb5 Bf5 19 Qe2

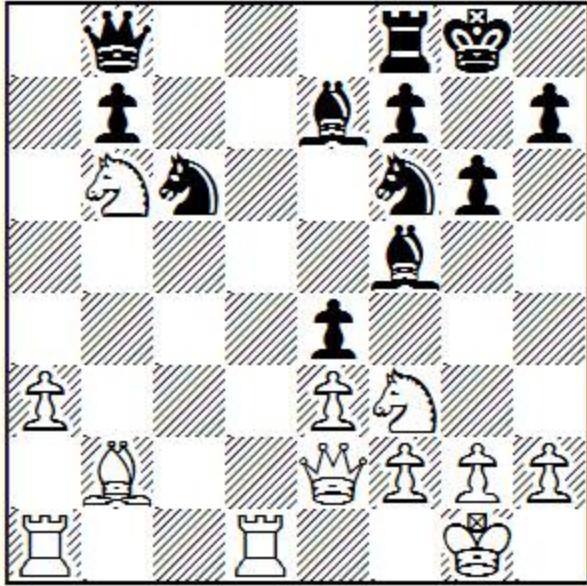


19 ... Bxb1

Giving up the exchange without any compensation. Alas, 19 ... Qb8 20 Bxf5 gxf5 21 Nh4 Qc8 22 Qf3 is bad for Black, as is 19 ... e4 20 Nh4 Rd8 21 Rxd8 Qxd8 22 Nxf5 gxf5 23 Ba2 with a strong attack, or 20 ... Bg4 21 f3 exf3 22 gxf3 Bh5 23 Nc7 Qc8 24 Nxa8 Qh3 25 Qf2! (intending Qg3; 25 Nb6 Qxh4 26 Nd5 is also good enough – Botvinnik, Polugayevsky) 25 ... Ng4 26 Qg3 Qxh4 27 Qxh4 Bxh4 28 fxc4 Bxc4 29 Rc1! Bg5 (29 ... Rxa8 30 Rc4 h5 31 h3) 30 Nc7 Bxe3+ 31 Kf1 Bxc1 32 Bxc1 with a decisive material advantage.

20 Nc7 Qb8 21 Nxa8 Bf5 (21 ... e4? is even worse: 22 Raxb1 exf3 23 Qxf3 and the knight at f6 is under attack) **22 Nb6 e4**

In a desperate position Karpov tries to complicate the play as much as possible, even at the cost of new concessions. He opens the diagonal for the white bishop and gives the opponent's pieces a strong point in the centre – all for the sake of weakening the enemy king's pawn screen. As yet it is altogether unclear how this weakening will be exploited, but now there is some pretext for the creation of counterplay!



23 Nd4 Nxd4 24 Bxd4 Bg4 25 f3 (this cannot be avoided) 25 ... exf3 26 gxf3
Be6

In Polugayevsky's opinion, 'perhaps the bishop should have been retreated to h5, so as to keep the f3-pawn under attack,' but this would have allowed 27 Bxf6 Bxf6 28 Nd7, winning.

27 Rac1 (the immediate 27 Qb2! was even stronger – Botvinnik) 27 ...
Rd8 28 Qb2! Ne8

Tal, who arrived in the auditorium at this moment, gives an interesting account: 'The first thing that struck me (I had not yet seen the position) was this: with measured steps Karpov was calmly walking from one end of the stage to the other. His opponent was sitting with his head in his hands, and simply physically it was felt that he was in trouble. "Everything would appear to be clear," I thought to myself, "things are difficult for Polugayevsky." But the demonstration board showed just the opposite! White was a clear exchange to the good – about such positions it is customary to say that the rest is a matter of technique. Who knows, perhaps Karpov's confidence, his habit of retaining his composure in the most desperate situations, was transmitted to his opponent and made Polugayevsky excessively nervous.'

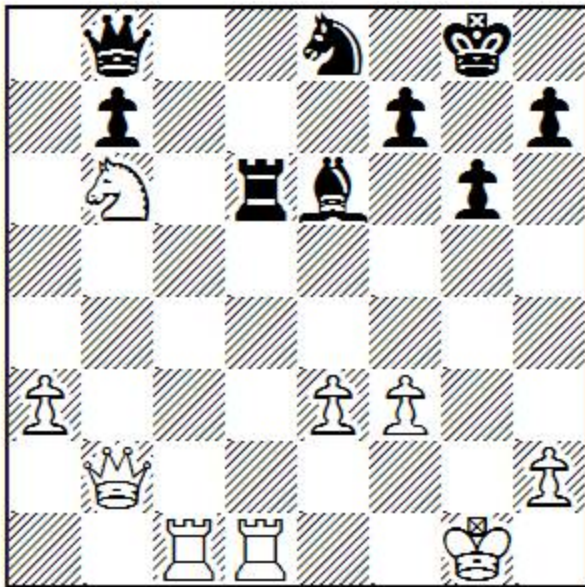
The spectators saw that Anatoly even had a slight smile on his face. 'To be honest, this wasn't a pretence, it somehow happened of its own

accord,' he said years later. 'And it was the natural serenity of my behaviour that overwhelmed Polugayevsky. He saw that on the board I was done for, but at the same time I was so calm and playing so easily! This meant that I was seeing something that he didn't see ... He was a sorry sight. Again and again he worked through the variations – and he couldn't understand how I could save myself. This wasn't surprising! – after all, he was looking for something that wasn't there ... '

29 Be5 Bd6

For the moment it is not possible to bring the queen out from the corner: after 29 ... Qa7 White decides matters with both the 'cold' 30 a4 Qa5 31 Qb5, and the 'hot' 30 Qb5!? Ng7 31 Rxd8+ Bxd8 32 Bd4 (and if 32 ... Qxa3, then 33 Ra1).

30 Bxd6 (the paralysing 30 Qd4! was very strong, and again 30 ... Qa7 is bad, because of 31 Bxd6 Rxd6 32 Nc8) **30 ... Rxd6**



31 Qb4?!

As Botvinnik rightly remarked, here there was more than one way to win. In particular everyone suggested 31 Qb5 (depriving the black queen of the important g5-square) 31 ... Qd8 32 Rxd6 Nxd6 33 Rd1 Qc7 34 Qe5, or 31 Rxd6 Qxd6 32 a4 – according to Botvinnik 'the a-pawn must be kept', but 32 Qd4! is even better, since 32 ... Qxa3 is bad in view of 33 Ra1 Qb3 34 Ra8 and wins.

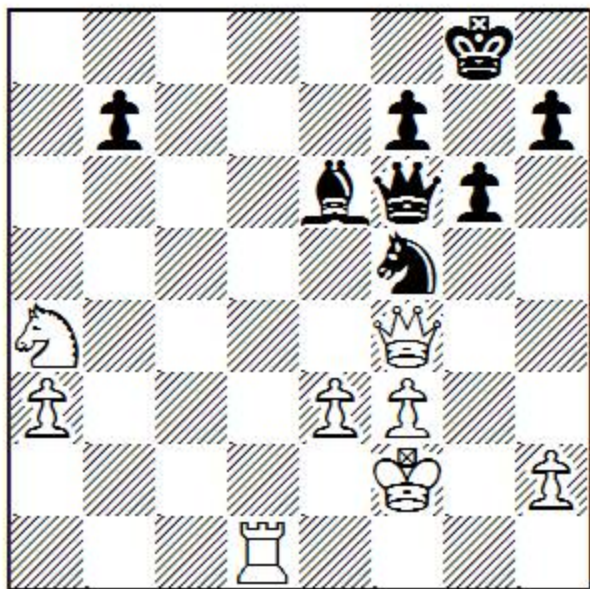
31 ... Qd8!

The black queen suddenly comes active and White effectively has to win the game anew. Taking account of his vexation at the mistake committed and the tiredness accumulated by the fifth hour of play, it was not at all easy to readjust for such a task.

32 Rxd6 Nxd6 33 Rd1 Qg5+ 34 Kf2 Nf5 35 Qf4 Qf6 36 Na4

'In time-trouble White makes the first correct move along the selected path, but he goes wrong later.' (Polugayevsky). After 36 Nd7? Qb2+ 37 Kg1 Bxd7 38 Rxd7 Qe2! Black would have easily gained a draw.

The alternative was 36 Nc4 Bxc4 37 Qxc4, and if 37 ... Qe5, then 38 Qf4 Qb2+ 39 Ke1 Qxa3 40 e4, practically forcing 40 ... Qc3+ 41 Qd2 Qxf3 42 exf5 Qh1+ 43 Ke2 Qxh2+ 44 Kd3 Qh3+ 45 Kc4 Qxf5 46 Qd8+ Kg7 47 Qd4+, when White should win. Botvinnik, Tal and Polugayevsky gave 37 ... Qb2+ 38 Qe2 Qxa3, regarding this position as drawn. But, in my view, White is gradually able to convert his exchange advantage: 39 Qd3 Qc5 40 Ke2 followed by e3-e4, or 39 ... Qb2+ 40 Rd2 Qe5 41 f4 etc.



36 ... Bb3! 37 Rd2?

'Chances of success were still offered by 37 Re1, as suggested by Furman. In this way White defends his important e3-pawn, and he can hope to gradually convert his material advantage.' (Polugayevsky). 37 Rd3! was more methodical, and after 37 ... Bxa4 (37 ... Bc2 38 Rd2) 38

Qxa4 Qb2+ 39 Kg1 Qc1+ 40 Qd1 or 39 ... h5 40 Qb3 White's task would be greatly simplified.

37 ... g5!

'With amazing coolness and skill, Karpov discovers every conceivable chance for counterplay. As for White, he had clearly lost his composure.' (Polugayevsky)

38 Qb8+

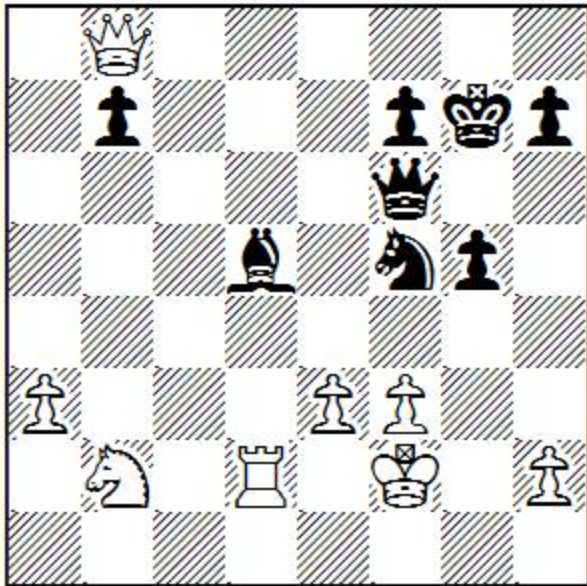
'After 38 Qe4 Bxa4 39 Qxa4 Qe5 Black's queen becomes more active, and he wins a pawn.' (Botvinnik)

38 ... Kg7 39 Nb2

Immediately before the time control the situation has become much sharper. The 'active' 39 Nc5?! is weak on account of 39 ... Qc3! 40 Nxb3 Qxe3+ 41 Kf1 Qxf3+ 42 Kg1 Qxb3 (42 ... Qe3+!?) 43 Qe5+ Kg6, and White has only a draw.

39 ... Bd5!

After 39 ... Qe7 40 Re2 Black's initiative could have evaporated.



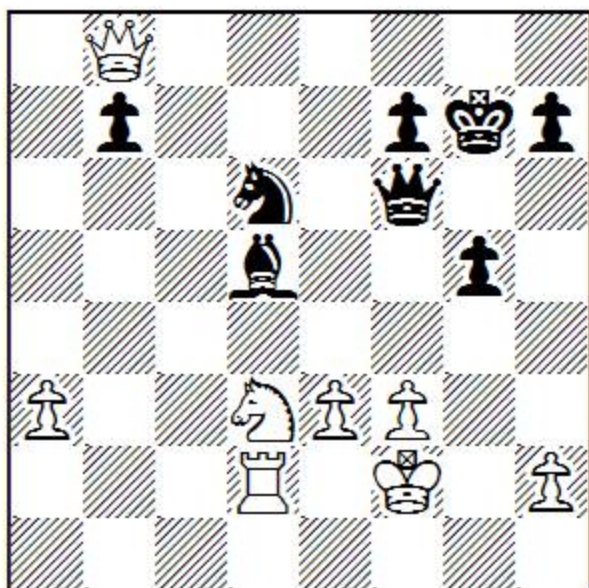
40 Nd3?!

With his last move before the time control White throws away the last remnants of his former advantage. In his commentary Polugayevsky recommends 40 Nd1 with the idea of 40 ... Nh4 (Botvinnik) 41 f4!, when Black loses (41 ... Bc6 42 Qd8), and gives 40

... Nxe3! as the only move leading to a draw, which Karpov would have had to find at the board!

At the same time he adds: '40 f4 fails, of course, to 40 ... Nd6!' But this sharp continuation was also dangerous for Black and would have forced him to demonstrate precise adjournment analysis! After 41 Rxd5 Qxb2+ 42 Kg3 Ne4+ 43 Kf3 Nd2+ 44 Kg4! the only way to play is 44 ... h5+! 45 Kxh5 Ne4!, for example: 46 fxf5 Qe2+ 47 Kh4 Qf2+ 48 Kg4 Qg2+ 49 Kf5 Qxf5+! 50 Kxe4 Qg2+ with perpetual pursuit of the king, or 46 Rxf5 Nxf5 47 fxf5 (47 Kxf5 Qg2+ 48 Kf5 Qg6+ etc.) 47 ... Qe2+ 48 Kh4 Qxe3 49 Qg3 Qe4+ 50 Qg4 Qe1+ 51 Kh5 Qe8 52 Qd4+ f6+ 53 Kg4 Qe2+, saving the queen endgame a pawn down.

40 ... Nd6!



41 Nf4!

This sealed move is the only way to force a draw. The resumption did not last long.

41 ... gxf4 42 Rxd5 Qb2+ (42 ... fxe3+ 43 Kxe3 Qe6+ 44 Kd4 is no better) 43 Kf1! fxe3 44 Rg5+! ½-½

In view of 44 ... Kh6 45 Qxd6+ Kxg5 46 Qe7+, picking up the e3-pawn.

'A draw which was equivalent to a catastrophe: Polugayevsky realised that he couldn't win any position against me,' Karpov sums up. 'It was effectively this game that was the last in the match,' Tal echoes,

‘The rest of the games were one-sided. Karpov was very much on the rise, whereas Polugayevsky was unable to regain his composure after the shocks in the 4th and 5th games.’ He consistently failed to convert his superiority in opening preparation, since he was inferior to his opponent in the subsequent play ...

Polugayevsky arrived for the 6th game feeling downcast. He was tormented by thoughts about misfortune and the unjustness of fate: instead of a certain one and a half points – only half a point, instead of the lead in the match – the role of having to catch up. At this moment – after just five games! – for him, as for many other experts, it was still hard to appreciate fully what an enormous force he was up against.

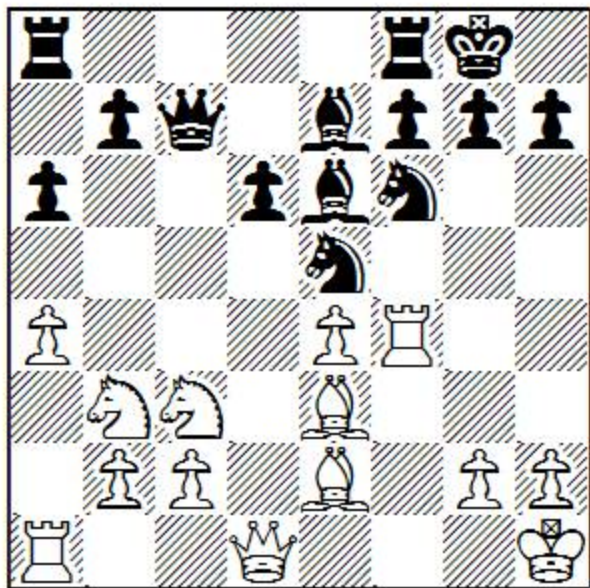
Game 56

A.Karpov-L.Polugayevsky

Candidates Match, Moscow 1974, 6th game

Sicilian Defence B92

1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Nf6 5 Nc3 a6 6 Be2 e5 7 Nb3 Be7 8 0-0 Be6 9 f4 Qc7 10 a4 Nbd7 11 Kh1!? 0-0 12 Be3 exf4 13 Rxf4 Ne5



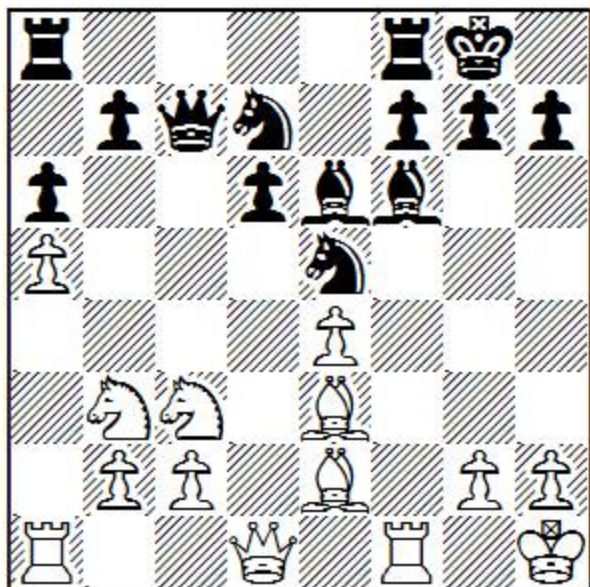
14 a5!

An important improvement (in the 4th game 14 Nd4 was played – *Game No.54*). White immediately fixes the enemy queenside and

vacates the a4-square, via which his queen's rook may come into play.

14 ... Nfd7 (later they played only 14 ... Rac8 or 14 ... Rfe8 – *Game No.57*) 15 Rf1 Bf6?!

Underestimating the role of White's potential outpost at d5, which is in enemy territory and therefore demands special control. 15 ... Rac8 or 15 ... Rfe8 is sounder, not fearing the manoeuvre Nd4-f5.



16 Nd5! Bxd5 17 Qxd5!

A sudden sharpening of the struggle – an intuitive sacrifice of two pawns! In explaining this unusual decision in a commentary made in 1978, Karpov discloses the peculiarities of his style:

‘Sometimes I am reproached for being dry, rational and careful. Yes, I am a practical player, and my play is largely based on technique. I attempt to play “correct” chess and never take risks as, say, Larsen does. As White, like everyone else, I aim for an advantage from the very start, but as Black I try first of all to equalise. But when there is a choice of moves, I by no means choose the simplest, but rather the most expedient. If there are several equally good continuations, my choice depends to a great extent on my opponents. Against Tal, for instance, I prefer to go in for simple positions, which are not to his taste, whereas against Petrosian I try to make the play more complicated. But if I see only one correct path, then, whoever is playing against me, I go

only along that path. However, I feel that in recent times my style has undergone certain changes.

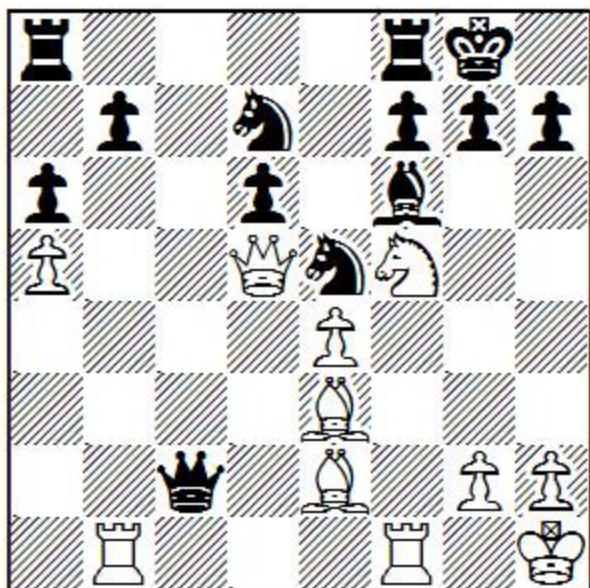
‘Let us return to the game. Previously the sacrifice of two pawns, which I offered to Polugayevsky, would probably not have occurred to me. Everyone thought that it had been prepared at home. But, “as God is my witness”, it was pure improvisation at the board. Even today I find this a “terrible” decision on my part. But after the quiet 17 exd5 Nc4 18 Bxc4 Qxc4 nothing remains of White’s opening advantage.’

17 ... Qxc2!

Accepting the challenge! Polugayevsky thought for more than an hour here: suppose White had a forced win prepared at home?! In Karpov’s opinion, ‘in the event of Black declining the sacrifice, he would have come under heavy positional pressure.’ In my opinion, after 17 ... Nc6 18 c3 Be5 he would merely have had a slightly inferior position, but – and this is far more important – Polugayevsky probably did not believe that he would be able to defend it against Karpov!

18 Nd4 Qxb2 (18 ... Qc5?! 19 Nf5! is dangerous) 19 Rab1 Qc3 20 Nf5 Qc2!

The best defence. After 20 ... Nc5 21 Bd4 Qc2 22 Nxd6 Qxe2 23 Bxe5 Nd7 (23 ... Bxe5? 24 Nxf7!) 24 Bg3 White’s domination would have extended over almost the entire board.



21 Rbe1?!

This move took Karpov 20 minutes, but ... 'An inaccuracy: now Black finds a defence. After 21 Rfe1 White would have gained a big advantage.' Yes, the deployment of the rooks is one of the most treacherous opening/middlegame problems! But in the given instance it made sense to leave the rook on the b-file, retaining the threat of its invasion at b7. However, whether White has an advantage after 21 Rfe1 is still an open question:

1) 21 ... Rfd8 22 Nxd6 Nb8!? (no direct refutation of this manoeuvre is apparent) 23 Rxb7 Nbc6 24 Bb6 Be7 25 Bxd8 Rxd8 26 Rxe7 Nxe7 27 Qxe5 Qd2 28 Rb1 Ng6! 29 Qh5 (29 Qd5 Rxd6 30 Qxd2 Rxd2 31 Bxa6 Ra2 with equality) 29 ... Qxd6 30 Rd1 Qf6 31 Rxd8+ Qxd8 32 Qd5 Qb8 33 g3 Ne7 with drawing chances;

2) 21 ... Nc5 22 Nxd6 Ncd3 23 Bxd3 Nxd3 24 Red1, and here Karpov considers only 24 ... Nf2+? 25 Bxf2 Qxf2 26 e5, winning, or 24 ... Ne5 25 Nxb7 (in my view, 25 Bd4 or 25 Rxb7 Rab8 26 Rb6! is stronger), although 24 ... Nb2!? is also possible, with good chances of holding on after 25 Rdc1 Qd3 26 Qxd3 Nxd3 27 Rd1 Ne5, or 25 Rf1 Qd3 26 Qxd3 Nxd3 27 Rxb7 Rfb8! etc.

21 ... Nc5?!

An obvious move, but ... now Black is balancing on the edge of a precipice! It is strange that Karpov does not make any comment on it: after all, back in 1975 Botvinnik pointed out that 'Black could have immediately mobilised his queen's rook by 21 ... Rad8!, and in the event of 22 Nxd6 (22 Qxb7?! Nc5! – G.K.) 22 ... Nb8 consolidated the placing of his pieces.' After 23 Qc5 Qa4! this would indeed have given him a clear way to equalise:

1) 24 Ra1 Qb3 25 Rfb1 (25 Rab1 Qa2) 25 ... Nbd7! (forcing the exchange of queens) 26 Rxb3 Nxc5 27 Bxc5 Nd7! 28 Bb6 (or 28 Nxf7 Nxc5 with equality) 28 ... Bxa1 29 Bxd8 Nc5 30 Rb6 Rxd8 31 Nxb7 Nxb7 32 Rxb7 Bc3 with a draw;

2) 24 Nxb7 Nd3 25 Bxd3 Rxd3 26 Rxf6 (or 26 Qf5 Nd7 27 Nc5 Nxc5 28 Bxc5 Re8 29 e5 Rd5 etc.) 26 ... gxf6 (26 ... Nd7 27 Qc6 Rxe3! will also do) 27 Bh6 Re8 28 Qf5 Qd1! 29 Qf1 Qxe1 30 Qxe1 Rxe4 31 Qc1 (31 Qg1? Red4) 31 ... Rc4! with a spectacular draw.

22 Nxd6 Ncd3 23 Bxd3 Nxd3

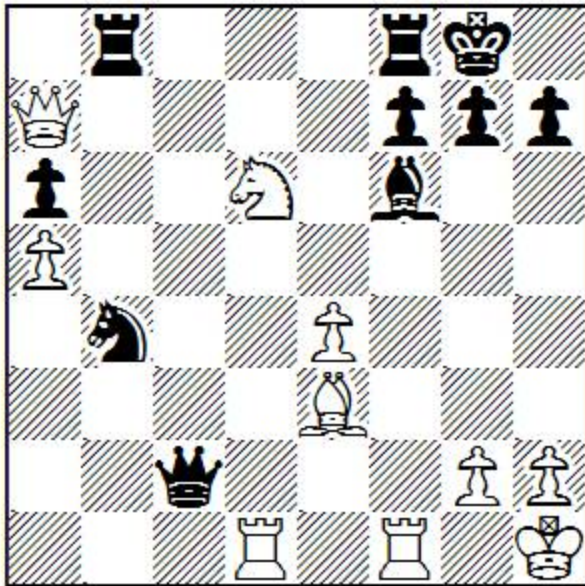
'The only move! After 23 ... Qxd3? 24 Bd4 with the threat of Rd1 Black's position would have become critical.' (Botvinnik). For example: 24 ... Ng4 25 Rd1 Qe2 26 e5! with a classic catastrophe on the f7-square.

24 Rd1 Nb4 25 Qxb7?!

Karpov hurries to regain the material as soon as possible, although 25 Qh5! (after Botvinnik's move 25 Qf5 Black has the satisfactory reply 25 ... Nc6) 'would have created the threat of 26 Rxf6 gxf6 27 Qg4+ Kh8 28 Bh6, which is not easily parried – 25 ... g6 26 Qc5.'

Of course, after 26 ... Qxc5 27 Bxc5 Black's defence is difficult, but it would appear that he has a saving regrouping – 27 ... Bc3! 28 Nxb7 Rfe8 29 Rf3 Na2 30 Nd6 Re5 with equalising chances, or 28 Rf3 Na2 29 Rb1 (29 Rdf1 Bb4! 30 Nxb7 Bxc5 31 Nxc5 Ra7 32 e5 Rc8 with equality) 29 ... Be5! 30 g4 (if 30 Rxb7, then 30 ... Rfd8 forces a draw) 30 ... Nc3 31 Rxb7 (31 Rbf1!?) 31 ... Rfb8! 32 Rxf7 (32 Re7 Rb1+ 33 Kg2 Rb2+ is no better) 32 ... Rxb7 33 Rxb7 Bxd6 34 Bxd6 Nxe4 35 Be5 Nf2+ 36 Kg2 Nxc4 37 Rg7+ Kf8 38 Rxh7 Rd8, nevertheless gaining a draw.

25 ... Rab8 26 Qa7



26 ... Qc6?

Polugayevsky cracks under the tension and commits a decisive mistake. '26 ... Qe2 would have given Black some counterplay, although even here after 27 Bb6 the advantage is with White.' (Karpov). A questionable assertion: 27 ... Nd3! 28 Nf5 Nf4 29 Ne3 Be5, and no advantage is apparent.

27 Rde1!? is far more unpleasant for Black. After this Botvinnik recommended 27 ... Qh5 (? – G.K.) 28 Rf5 Qg4 ‘with a tenable position’, but here 29 e5! is strong. And 28 Rxf6! gxf6 29 Nf5 is even better, with an irresistible attack: 29 ... Rb5 30 Bh6!, or 29 ... Rfe8 30 Qc7! etc.

Where then should the queen move to? After 27 ... Qg4?! the quiet 28 h3 Qe6 29 Rd1 is possible, as is the sharp 28 Rxf6!? gxf6 29 Nf5 Qxe4 30 Ne7+ Kh8 31 Bd2 with the initiative for White. 27 ... Qa2? is dangerous because of the same thematic sacrifice 28 Rxf6! gxf6 29 Nf5, when it is doubtful whether Black has a satisfactory defence: 29 ... Nd3 30 Qxa6 Rb1 is bad on account of 31 Ne7+ Kg7 32 Bh6+!! when Black is crushed; if 29 ... Nc6, then 30 Qxa6 Qxa5 31 Qf1! with decisive threats, while after 29 ... Qxa5 there is a quiet move of murderous strength – 30 Rf1!! (30 ... Nc6 31 Qd7 etc.).

It would appear that only 27 ... Qb2! (defending against Rxf6!) would have retained equal chances, for example: 28 Nc4 (nothing is achieved by 28 Rb1 Qe2 or 28 Rf2 Qe5 29 Bf4 Qd4) 28 ... Qa2 29 e5 Nc2!, and Black is alright.

27 Bf4!

A typical Karpov move, denying the opponent even a hint of counterplay: ‘The threat of e4-e5 restricts Black, and his knight at b4 finds itself out of play.’ The sharp 27 Rxf6! gxf6 28 Bh6 with the threat of Qe3 would also have been decisive, for example: 28 ... Qc2 (28 ... Nd3 29 Bxf8) 29 Rc1 Qd3? 30 Qd7! Qe2 31 Qh3, or 29 ... Qe2 30 Qd4 Nd3 31 Qxf6 Qb2 32 Qg5+ Kh8 33 Qg3! etc. In the press centre this exchange sacrifice was fervently upheld by Furman, but after seeing Anatoly’s move, he said: ‘That’s also good.’

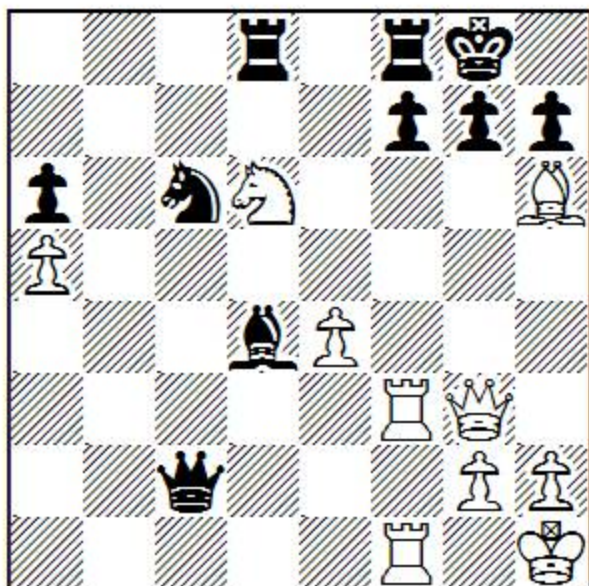
27 ... Ra8 28 Qf2 Rad8 (if 28 ... Qc3, then 29 Qe2!) 29 Qg3!

‘The threat is stronger than its execution! Paradoxically, this often is indeed the case. White does not hurry to advance e4-e5 and increases the pressure.’ (Karpov)

29 ... Qc3

‘Black has no satisfactory defence: Karpov has succeeded in implementing his most effective strategy – that of domination. Material is equal, but White’s pieces occupy strong positions and control the most important squares on the board, whereas the black pieces are merely convenient targets for him to attack. All that remains is for White to concentrate his forces for the decisive stroke against Black’s kingside.’ (Botvinnik)

30 Rf3 Qc2 31 Rdf1 Bd4 32 Bh6 (a simple, but spectacular finish; 32 Nf5 Qxe4 33 Bd6 would also have won) 32 ... Nc6



33 Nf5

33 Nxf7 Qc4 would by no means have 'complicated matters', as Karpov writes, but was a second way to win: after 34 Bxg7! to avoid a pretty mate Black would have had to part first with his queen – 34 ... Qxf1+ 35 Rxf1 Bxg7 36 Qb3!, then with a rook – 36 ... Rxf7 (36 ... Nd4 37 Nh6++ Kh8 38 Qg8+! and Nf7 mate) 37 Qxf7+ Kh8, and after 38 Qc7! – also with his knight!

33 ... Qb2

Or 33 ... Be5 34 Bxg7! Bxg3 35 Rxg3 (Karpov) 35 ... h5 36 Bf6+ Kh7 37 Rg7+ Kh8 38 Rxf7+ Kg8 39 Nh6 mate (Botvinnik).

34 Bc1! Qb5 35 Nh6+ Kh8 36 Nxf7+ (to cap it all, Black also has to give up material) 36 ... Rxf7 37 Rxf7 Bf6 38 Qf2 Kg8 39 Rxf6 gxf6 40 Qxf6 1-0

The best game of the match.

The score became 2-0 with four draws. Karpov needed just one more win. He could perhaps have gained this in the 7th game. Polugayevsky played very nervously: first he lost the opening advantage he had gained, then he suddenly launched an unfounded attack on the kingside, which merely led to the creation of weaknesses in his own position. On the 25th move Karpov could have advantageously opened the centre and gained a marked advantage.

But, as Tal put it, 'it would appear that he decided not to deviate from his planned program, in which the optimal result in the "black" games was a draw.'

The match concluded in the 8th game. In essence, this was the finishing off of a seriously wounded opponent.

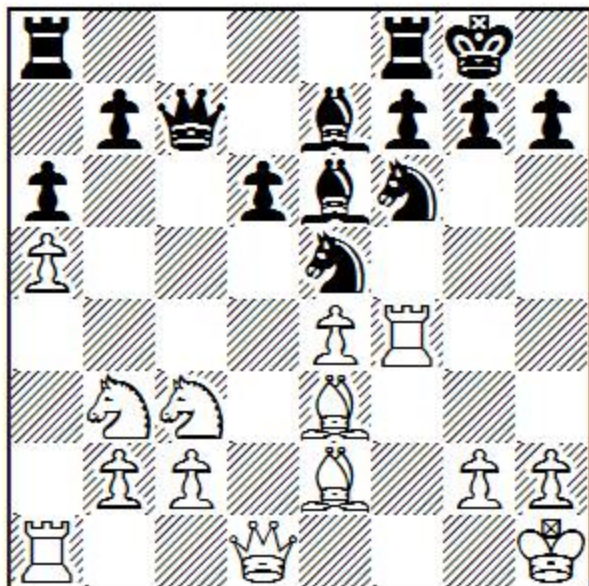
Game 57

A.Karpov-L.Polugayevsky

Candidates Match, Moscow 1974, 8th game

Sicilian Defence B92

1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Nf6 5 Nc3 a6 6 Be2 e5 7 Nb3 Be7 8 0-0 Be6 9 f4 Qc7 10 a4 Nbd7 11 Kh1 0-0 12 Be3 exf4 13 Rxf4 Ne5 14 a5! (14 Nd4 – *Game No.54*)



14 ... Rfe8

Another product of running repairs (14 ... Nfd7 – *Game No.56*).

Later Black switched to the standard Sicilian move 14 ... Rac8, preparing ... Nfd7 (now this is safe, since White does not have Nd5) and preventing Ra1-a4-d4, for example: 15 Ra4 (15 Bb6 Qd7 16 Ra4? Rxc3) 15 ... Nfd7! (with the threat of ... Bg5) 16 Rf1 Nc4 17 Bxc4 Bxc4 18 Rf2 Bf6 19 Bd4 Rfe8 with equality (Karpov-Browne, Manila 1976). 15 Nd4 is better, but here too after 15 ... Nfd7 it is hard for White to gain a noticeable advantage: 16 Rf1 Rfe8 17 Nf5 Bf8 18 Qe1 Kh8 19

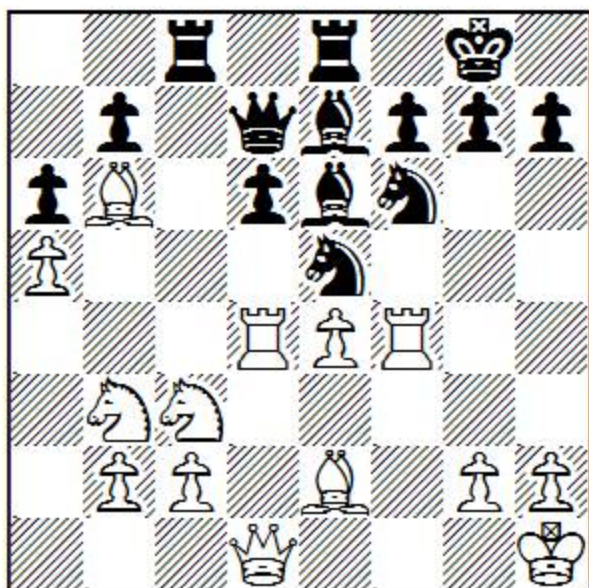
Qg3 g6 (Tal-K.Grigorian, 42nd USSR Championship, Leningrad 1974), 16 Qe1 Rfe8 17 Qg3 Ng6 18 Rff1 Bf6 (Tseshkovsky-Balashov, Vilnius Zonal 1975), or 16 Qd2 Rfe8 17 Nf5 Bf8 18 Rf2 Kh8 and ... g7-g6 (Matanovic-Polugayevsky, Moscow 1977).

15 Bb6 (15 Nd4!? Tseshkovsky-Polugayevsky, Sochi 1974) 15 ... Qd7 (15 ... Qc8 with the idea of ... Nfd7 is also possible) 16 Ra4 Rac8!

A good move, made however after 45 minutes' thought, which indicates Polugayevsky's uncertainty. The awkward 16 ... Nc6 (Botvinnik, Karpov) is of no use to Black.

17 Rd4

A manoeuvre which at the time was considered dangerous for Black. But is this in fact so?



17 ... Qc6

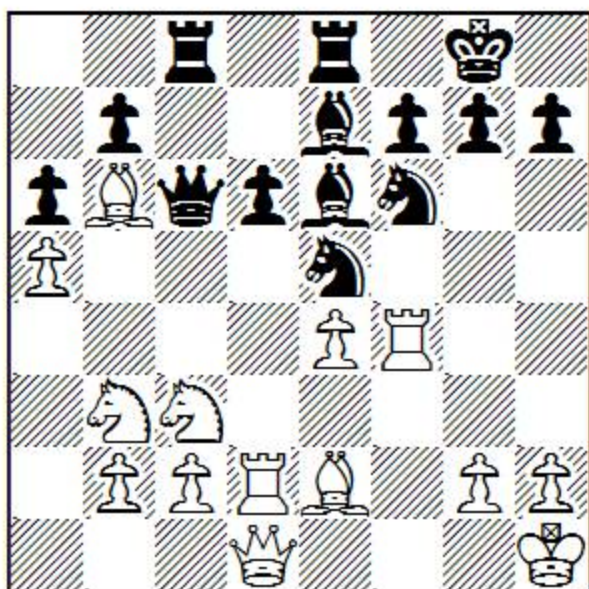
Annotating this game in *Informator*, Polugayevsky suggested here 17 ... Rxc3! 18 bxc3 Qc6! 'with an unclear game'. Karpov retorts: 'However, in White's favour is the very fact that Black has to go in for a questionable exchange sacrifice, aiming in return for unclear positional compensation.'

Using pure logic in the evaluation of a position is, of course, pointless. But if account is taken of concrete factors, it becomes apparent Black does indeed have very clear compensation for the exchange: his bastions in the centre are strong, whereas White's

pawns are broken and are targets for attack. 19 ... Qxc3 is threatened, and he has to play 19 Qe1 (19 c4 Nfd7!), but after 19 ... d5! 20 Rd1 (20 Qg3 Ng6) 20 ... Nxe4 Black has nothing to fear, for example: 21 c4 Nxc4 22 Nd4 Qc8 23 Nxe6 fxe6 24 Bd3 Nxb6 25 Bxe4 dxe4 26 axb6 e3 with equality.

18 Rd2

Karpov is content with his position: 'So, White has regrouped and wants to carry out the manoeuvre Nb3-d4-f5 which is traditional in this variation. Whereas the opponent has no active plan' (usually associated with ... Nfd7). But as yet he does not have any problems!

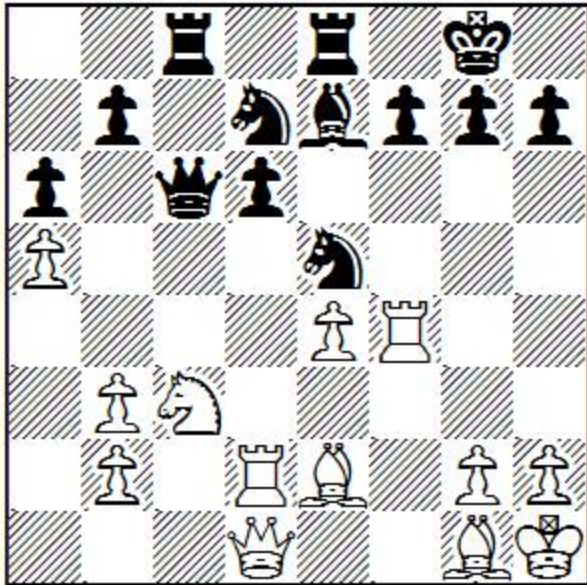


18 ... Bxb3

'Hurrying to eliminate this promising knight. If 18 ... Ng6 there would have followed 19 Nd4.' (Karpov). Polugayevsky also evaluated this variation White's favour. However, it is hard to say how dangerous his initiative is in reality: 19 ... Qd7 20 Rf1 Ne5, and after 21 Nf5, apart from 21 ... Bxf5, the typical sacrifice 21 ... Rxc3!? 22 bxc3 Nxe4 comes into consideration.

It can now be concluded that White's entire plan with the manoeuvre of his rook (a1-a4-d4-d2) and knight (b3-d4-f5) is not so terrible, as was once written by the commentators and authors of theoretical articles. Moreover, the exchange 18 ... Bxb3, although not obligatory, does not yet spoil anything.

19 cxb3 Nfd7 (of course, not 19 ... Ng6 20 Rf1 Nxe4? in view of 21 Nxe4 Qxe4 22 Bf3 Qb4 23 Bxb7) 20 Bg1



20 ... Bg5?

A blunder, leading to the loss of the game and the match. The game Safarov-E.Vladimirov (1975), played soon afterwards, went 20 ... Qc7! 21 Nd5 (21 b4?! Bg5) 21 ... Qxa5 22 Nxe7+ Rxe7 23 Rxd6 Qc7, and the powerful outpost at e5 secured Black a good position.

Karpov again retorts: 'However, in all probability White's play can be improved: 21 Rd5 Nf6 22 Bb6 Qc6 23 Rxf6! gxf6 24 Bg4 with a powerful initiative for the exchange.' Alas, this variation has a 'hole': instead of 22 ... Qc6? Black has the very strong 22 ... Nxd5! 23 Bxc7 Nxf4 24 Bb6 Nxe2 25 Qxe2 Bf6 with excellent compensation for the queen.

After giving up his queen in another way, Polugayevsky encounters insuperable difficulties.

21 Rxd6 Bxf4

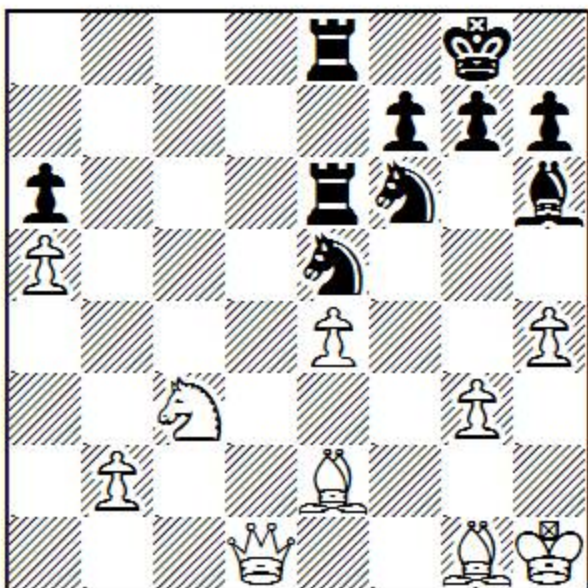
In the event of 21 ... Qxd6 (21 ... Qc7 22 Rf5) 22 Qxd6 Bxf4 23 Qb4 Rb8 24 Nd5 the white queen is again far more agile than the black rooks, and the pawn march b3-b4-b5 is on the agenda.

22 Rxc6 Rxc6 23 b4! (beginning the conversion of his pawn majority on the queenside) 23 ... Nf6?!

'23 ... Rcc8 was better, coordinating the heavy pieces.' (Karpov). But here too after 24 b5 Black cannot save the game: 24 ... axb5 25 g3! Bg5(h6) 26 Bxb5 with the threat of Qd5.

'Black should have united his rooks by 23 ... Ree6, keeping the important d6-square under control.' (Botvinnik). And indeed, 24 b5 axb5 (24 ... Red6? 25 Qf1!; 24 ... Rc7 25 Bb6!; 24 ... Rc8 25 Qd5!) 25 Bxb5 Rcd6 26 Nd5 Bg5 looks rather more tenacious.

24 b5 Rce6 25 bxa6 bxa6 26 g3 Bg5 27 h4 Bh6



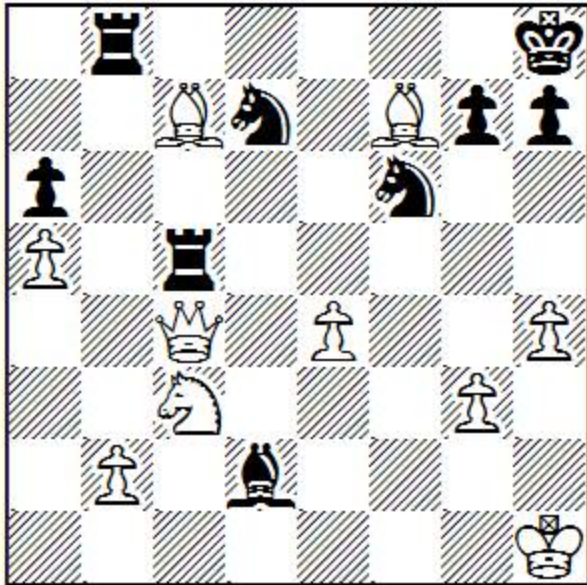
28 Bb6!

'The pawn weakness at a6 has fatal consequences.' (Karpov). The 'sharp' 28 g4 g5 29 Be3 would also have won, but Botvinnik did not like this and ... this is not the Karpov way of finishing off!

28 ... Ned7

'The retreat of the centralised knight allows White's king's bishop to become more active. The last possibility of resisting was 28 ... Nfd7.' (Botvinnik). But then the activity of the white knight would have increased – 29 Nd5! Rc6(8) 30 Kg2 Rc1 31 Qa4 etc.

29 Bc4 Re5 (or 29 ... Rc6 30 Bxa6 Nxb6 31 Bb5 and wins) 30 Qb3! Rb8 31 Bxf7+ Kh8 32 Qc4! Bd2 33 Bc7 Rc5



34 Qxc5! Nxc5 35 Bxb8 Bxc3 36 bxc3 Nfxe4 37 c4

As a result White has just an extra pawn in the endgame – and no saving chances at all for the opponent!

37 ... Nd7 38 Bc7 g6 39 Be6 Nec5 40 Bxd7 Nxd7 41 Bd6 1-0

In an interview after the match Karpov magnanimously admitted that the 3-0 score did not reflect the real, purely chess strengths of the two contestants – rather, it mirrored Polugayevsky's psychological state. Here one involuntarily remembers Fischer's statement after his match with Taimanov: 'The 6-0 result was too high ... The struggle was much more difficult ... It is easier to be a gentleman when you win ...' But one can certainly agree with Tal: 'In the competitive, psychological sense, Karpov was head and shoulders above his opponent.'

This fact was confirmed by Polugayevsky himself: 'Now, with the benefit of hindsight, I see very clearly the errors I made in preparing for the match. I devoted too much time to purely chess work, and did not concentrate sufficiently on the need for correct psychological preparation.'

However, there was also 'something else', which was described well by grandmaster Alexei Suetin: 'I don't want to say that the outcome of the match was not influenced in any way by either Polugayevsky's psychological condition, or his opening repertoire. Of course they influenced it. But the main reason for such a heavy defeat was the play

of the winner. Karpov has an astounding technique, which is at the service of a healthy practicality. He plays easily and quickly, he accurately evaluates a position, and one gains the impression that Karpov's analytical scales are far more sensitive than those of his opponents. It has been remarked many times that Karpov has little experience. This is so. But notice how quickly the grandmaster gains this experience. When he is playing, Karpov the student is all the time learning. And the teachers, when they capitulate, give him high marks.'

Many of those who witnessed this short match were left with the feeling that they had witnessed a minor miracle (what would they think after the semi-final!). 'But the most staggering thing is that Polugayevsky's failure in no way affected his attitude towards me,' Karpov recalls. 'On the contrary: the worse things went for him, the more courteous and benevolent he became to me. With no one else did I ever discuss in such detail and so openly a game just played. These analyses drew us very close. One of the paradoxical results of the match was that I gained Polugayevsky's friendship. If only all matches would end in this way!'

Leap into the Unknown

Karpov's next encounter – his semi-final match with Spassky (Leningrad, spring 1974) deserves to be covered in the greatest detail: this was one of the most dramatic chess events of those years, fully comparable with a match for the world crown. The young, rapidly improving chess talent was opposed by the 37-year-old ex-world champion, who had just brilliantly won the USSR Championship and his quarter-final match with Byrne. They played up to four wins, but with a limit of 20 games.

The other semi-final brought together Petrosian and Korchnoi, and so at the time Karpov was compared with the young D'Artagnan, who had joined up with the three musketeers. Roshal: 'But before the semi-final match Spassky was nevertheless considered the favourite. It appeared to many that in the quarter-final it was not that Karpov had beaten Polugayevsky, but rather that the latter had somehow beaten himself. Only Botvinnik smiled: "Just as 'inexplicably' he will also beat Spassky." And the cautious Petrosian predicted a struggle "no less interesting than a clash between any one of the Candidates and Fischer". But the majority of the forecasts anticipated a win for Spassky.'

The FIDE President Max Euwe, who arrived for the opening of the match, was no exception. At a press conference he confirmed that he gave some preference to Spassky. 'Now he has once again captured his earlier form' (regarding which Botvinnik remarked that it wasn't at all becoming for the FIDE President to 'play at forecasting'). True, Euwe promptly added: 'However, in the development of talented young players, qualitative leaps can take place. It is hard to guess whether Karpov will now make such a leap. If he does, then I would not rule out the possibility of him even winning the title of world champion.'

But what did Karpov himself think about the forthcoming match? 'I did not even try to guess how it would turn out. Whereas I could compare myself with Polugayevsky, Spassky was a weight that I had never before lifted,' he was to say years later. 'Neither before nor after this match have I worked so much on chess. The general conception was developed, the psychological strategy was developed; weak points in my opponent's armour and fencing skill were sought – and methods were developed, in order to try and beat him here, or land a strong blow there. I endeavoured to forget about my deep respect for Spassky, I endeavoured not to think about his grandiosity. I told myself: before you is a very difficult, but unusual task ... A great help was provided by the material from Spassky's match with Fischer. Both chess, and psychological material.'

Indeed, the Spassky-Fischer match (1972) had emphasised the need for a serious study of the opening. But Fischer had retired from chess, and the echoes of Reykjavik gradually quietened down. The sharp opening duels of that match began to be forgotten, and preparation again reduced to a study of theoretical reviews in the magazines *Shakhmaty v SSSR* and *Shakhmatny Bulletin* and an examination of games in *Informator*. As before, the opening lines used by Spassky against equally 'erudite' opponents enabled him to obtain complicated middlegame positions, in which the main role was played by improvisation and intuition.

But this was a short period of calm before a radical revision of the methods of opening study. The Spassky-Karpov match was that epochal event, after which the enormous significance of opening proficiency became clear to everyone. Spassky prepared for the match in the old-fashioned way, and this method proved inadequate, quickly leaving him effectively 'without an opening'. Whereas, by contrast, for two and a half months Karpov and his trainers polished their planned

opening systems, studying not so much variations, as the conceptual fundamentals of opening lines, their middlegame and sometimes their endgame positions. Karpov worked for 10-12 hours a day! Spassky had no conception of the strength of the grandmaster against whom he had been drawn ...

On this occasion Karpov was helped by Furman and Razuvaev (there was no Balashov: Spassky had turned to him for help, not knowing that he was in the opponent's team, and Yuri decided to observe neutrality). Two major surprises were prepared: with Black – the Caro-Kann Defence, and with White – a partial switch to 1 d4, i.e. 'serving' from either side. The result? 'Throughout the match Spassky was unable to adapt properly to me; my opening play was very uncomfortable for him. He, like Polugayevsky before him, was unable to obtain his favourite positions.' (Karpov)

The start of the match appeared to confirm the forecasts. Because of a bad cold, Anatoly was forced to take a time-out even before the first game. 'A day later they sat down at the board: a self-confident, sun-tanned (from a mountain resort), athletic-looking man, and a pale, thin youth, not yet recovered from his cold and hence slightly hunched,' describes Roshal, but when before his eyes Karpov lost with White in a Sicilian Defence (*Volume 3, Game No.83*), he noticed a curious detail: 'Leaving for home after the hopeless adjournment session, Furman was upset but he did not forget to remind Karpov that Fischer also lost the first game to Spassky, and this did not prevent him from winning the match.'

And this was the path followed by Karpov, who keenly sensed his opponent's state of mind. 'The win in the first game did Spassky a bad service, just like his win in the first game against Fischer. He decided that everything was clear, and he calmed down and relaxed.'

In the 2nd game, in reply to 1 e4, Anatoly employed the Caro-Kann Defence for the first time in his life! And his complacently inclined opponent decided to defer the opening debate, by offering a draw as early as the 17th move. Botvinnik: 'Both Spassky and the "experts" had no doubts about the outcome. This decision was symptomatic: the present-day Spassky wants to win with the minimum of effort; he is not keyed up for intense exertion, and he does not press himself.'

For the further course of the match the 3rd game was very important.

Game 58

A.Karpov-B.Spassky

Candidates Match, Leningrad 1974, 3rd game

King's Indian Defence E91

1 d4!?

Everyone was expecting 1 e4 and an improvement for White in the Sicilian Defence, but Spassky was given a new surprise: Karpov had begun a game in this way only a few times in his life! Realising that his young opponent was prepared for the main lines of his opening repertoire, the ex-world champion had to choose at the board between those that he had already employed, and something that was new, but familiar only in general terms.

I can imagine what Spassky was thinking about during those moments. He never aimed to be an openings expert, regarding himself as king of the middlegame. His long-standing trainer Igor Bondarevsky 'did not overrate' the role of opening knowledge, but thought that the main thing was to have a clear head before a game, and that about the opening it was sufficient to have a general impression and, ideally, a knowledge of a few subtleties.

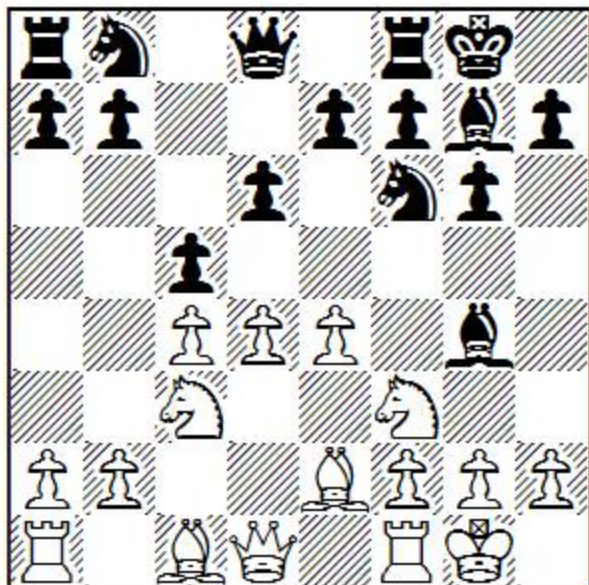
1 ... Nf6 2 c4 g6

A surprise in return? Not wishing to check what the Karpov team had prepared in the Nimzo-Indian Defence or the Queen's Indian, Spassky began remembering his King's Indian games, trying to find a half-forgotten set-up and some ideas which could be used.

3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 Nf3 0-0 6 Be2 c5

Spassky is afraid of preparations in the main lines, and instead of 6 ... e5 he replies with a rare variation of the King's Indian. However, this was hardly a good decision. It allowed Karpov to treat the positions, arising in a new opening for him, using the general considerations by which he was guided in similar situations.

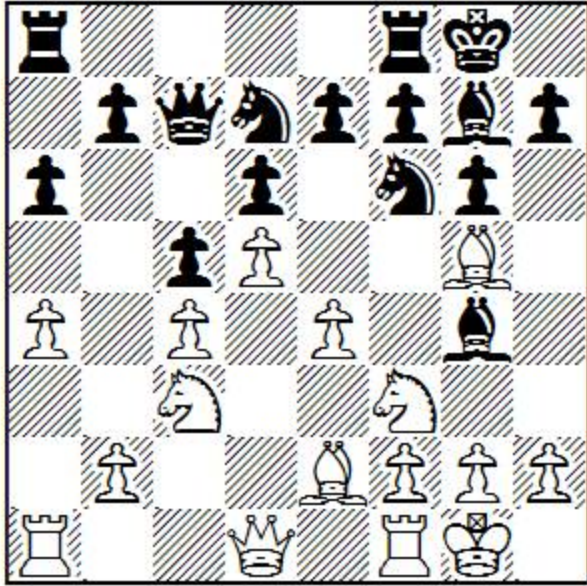
7 0-0 Bg4



8 d5

Karpov's choice was not hard to guess. When studying Polugayevsky's games, he, of course, noticed how splendidly the latter handled such positions as White, and he adopted his method. In addition, Karpov liked to block the centre with d4-d5 in the Ruy Lopez, and this experience came in useful in the King's Indian.

8 ... Nbd7 9 Bg5 a6 10 a4 Qc7



11 Qd2

The exchange of bishops suggested by Botvinnik – 11 Nd2 Bxe2 12 Qxe2 – promises little after 12 ... h6 13 Bf4 Qa5. Karpov provokes a different exchange, reckoning that sooner or later his light-squared bishop will gain scope.

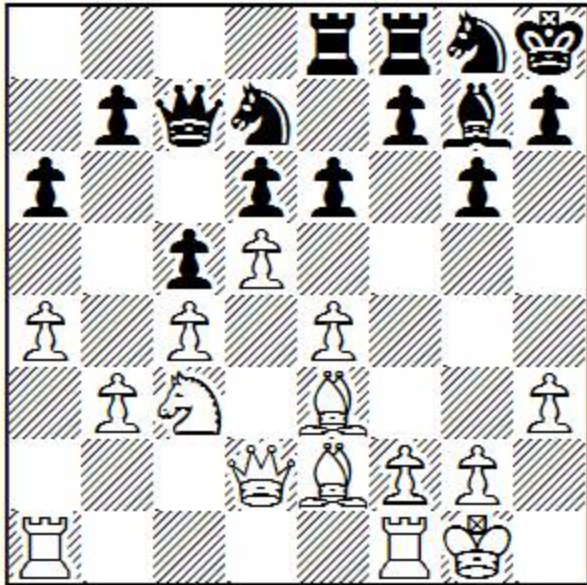
11 ... Rae8 12 h3 Bxf3 13 Bxf3 e6 14 b3?!

The attempt to open up the game immediately – 14 dxe6 fxe6 15 Rad1 would have been parried by 15 ... Ne5! 16 Be2 Nf7 with equality. And Karpov decides to wait, for the moment accumulating small pluses. But instead of 14 b3, which deprives his knight of support, it was better to play 14 a5 (seizing space and, above all, restricting the black queen) 14 ... Kh8 15 Ra2 exd5 16 cxd5 c4 17 Ra4 Ne5 18 Be2.

14 ... Kh8! (the start of a standard regrouping) 15 Be3

For the moment the bishop is doing nothing at g5, and White withdraws it to a position which soon proves unpleasant for the opponent. Botvinnik suggested 15 Rac1, but it is not clear what White can boast of after 15 ... Qb6 16 Qf4 Ng8.

15 ... Ng8 16 Be2



The second bishop also begins looking in the direction of the queenside, just in case making way for the f2-pawn.

16 ... e5!?

An unexpected, but quite logical decision: Black is counting on the effect of ... f7-f5 and the exchange of the dark-squared bishops. Another way of fighting for equality was the opening of the centre – 16 ... Qa5 17 Rac1 exd5. The symmetric 18 exd5 would have allowed Black counter-chances after 18 ... f5 – 19 g3 Re7 20 Rfe1 Rfe8, or 19 Bd3 Qb4 (19 ... f4? 20 Ne4!) 20 Bf4 Ne5. His problems are more difficult after 18 cxd5, although he has a choice:

1) 18 ... Bxc3 19 Rxc3 Rxe4 20 Qb2 Ngf6 21 Bf3 Re7. This direct attempt to hold the position involves an exchange sacrifice for some compensation: 22 Bg5 Re5 23 Bf4 Kg8 24 Bxe5 Nxe5 25 Rb1 Qb4, or 22 Bg4 Kg8 23 Bxd7 Nxd5 24 Bd2 Rxd7 25 Rf3 Qd8 26 Bh6 f5 27 Rd1 Nf6 28 Bxf8 Qxf8;

2) 18 ... Ngf6 19 Rfe1 Qb4, launching into complications, which after a mass elimination of pieces may conclude in a prosaic endgame: 20 Bf4 (20 f3 Nh5, and Black has a reasonable variation of the Modern Benoni) 20 ... Nxe4 (20 ... Ne5 21 Qc2! is a variation of the Modern Benoni which is now more pleasant for White) 21 Nxe4 Rxe4 22 Qxb4 cxb4 23 Bxd6 Rfe8 24 f3! Rxe2! 25 Rxe2 Rxe2 26 Rc8+ Bf8 27 Bxf8 Nxf8 28 Rxf8+ Kg7 29 Rb8 a5! (but not 29 ... Re7? 30 Kf2 Rd7 31 Ke3

Rxd5 32 Rxb7 a5 33 Rb5 Rd1 34 Rxa5 Rb1 35 Kd4 Rxb3 36 Kc4 Rb2 37 Rb5 Rxg2 38 a5 and wins) 30 Rxb7 Re3 31 Rb5 Rxb3 32 Rxa5 Ra3 33 d6 Rd3. Here the chances of a draw are very real, for example: 34 Rb5 Rxd6 35 Rxb4 Rd2, or 34 Ra6 b3 35 Rb6 Kf6 36 a5 Ke6 37 a6 Rxd6 38 a7 Rxb6 39 a8Q b2 40 Qa2 Kf6 41 Qb1 h5 – with such a queen White cannot win.

17 g4

Strategically a very committing move. Karpov tries to restrict the opponent's counterplay, reckoning that the weakening of his kingside is unimportant, since the black pieces are defensively placed. Indeed, the g2-g4 advance is an important part of White's plan, but for maximum effect the most appropriate moment for it needs to be chosen.

Again, as on the 14th move, 17 a5 f5! 18 f3 was more advisable, and if 18 ... Qd8! (18 ... Ngf6 19 g4!) the prophylactic 19 Kh2! is strong, in order after 19 ... Qh4 to have 20 g3 (with the sequel 20 ... Qe7 21 g4! Qh4 22 Qe1! Qxe1 23 Raxe1 Bh6 24 Bxh6 Nxh6 25 exf5 gxf5 26 Bd1 Re7 27 Bc2 Rg7 28 Rg1), while if 19 ... Ngf6 this is the right time to play for restriction – 20 g4!, not allowing the activation of the queen. Here 19 ... f4 is ineffective, since without his light-squared bishop Black cannot create any serious threats to the enemy king, whereas White's offensive on the other flank will develop unchecked.

17 ... Qd8?!

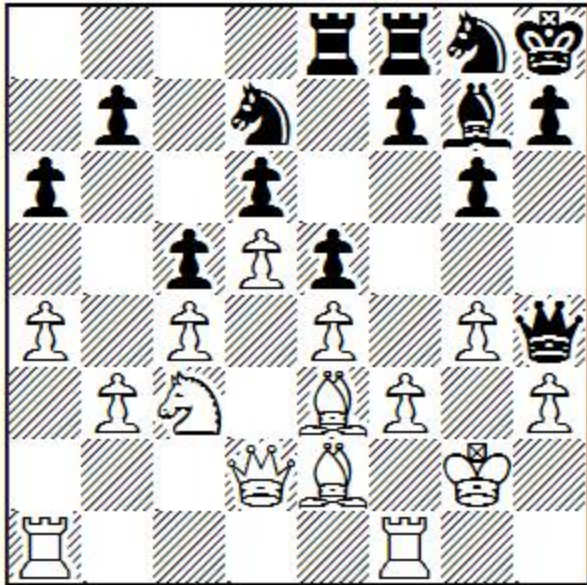
Spassky sticks to his plan, but the immediate 17 ... f5! was stronger, and after 18 f3 (if 18 gxf5 gxf5 19 exf5, then Black has 19 ... e4! 20 f3 exf3 21 Rxf3 – 21 Bxf3? Rxe3! – 21 ... Qa5 22 Rc1 Ne7 with strong counterplay) 18 ... Qd8 19 Kg2 it could have led to a 'dead draw': 19 ... f4! 20 Bf2 a5! 21 h4 h6 22 Nb5 Nb8.

18 Kg2 Qh4

The penultimate link of the planned set-up: the h3-pawn is blocked, and if 19 Bg5 there follows 19 ... Bh6! With the king at g2, the attempt by 18 ... f5 to block the position completely, which was successful a move earlier (hoping for 19 f3 f4! 20 Bf2 a5!), on this occasion would have led to an advantage for White: 19 gxf5! gxf5 20 exf5 e4! 21 f3! exf3+ 22 Bxf3 Ngf6 23 a5 Ne5 24 Bg5 Nf7 25 Bf4.

19 f3

The turning point in the game, which for a long time remained undisclosed.



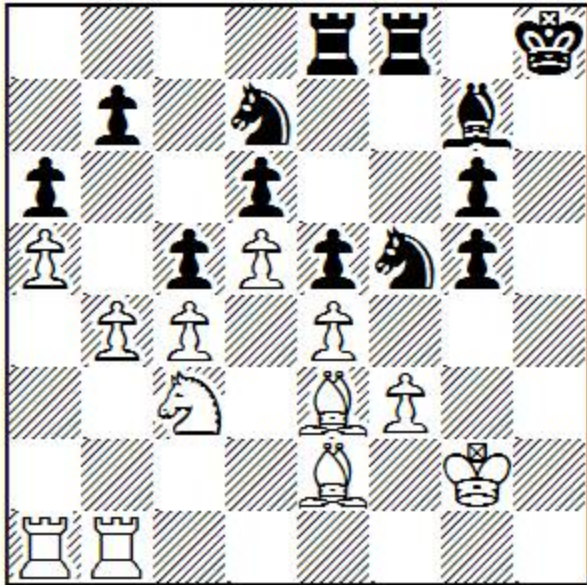
19 ... Bh6?

One can only try and guess why Spassky faltered at the height of the battle. Perhaps he thought that, with the queens on, Black did not have to fear the further advance of the g4-pawn?

19 ... f6 20 Bf2 Bh6 21 Qd3 Qg5 22 h4! Qd2 23 Rfd1 Qxd3 24 Bxd3 was hardly tolerable, but the thematic 19 ... f5! would have maintained the tension: after 20 a5 Bh6! 21 Bxh6 (21 g5? f4!; 21 exf5 gxf5 22 Bd3 e4!) 21 ... Nxh6 22 Qe1 Qd8! Black has active counterplay, while 20 Qe1 Qxe1 21 Raxe1 did not promise the same stunning effect as in the game, since the exchange of the dark-squared bishops would have followed – 21 ... Bh6! 22 Bxh6 Nxh6. It would appear that the passivity of the e2-bishop does not allow White any chances of success: 23 a5 fxg4 24 hxg4 (24 fxg4 g5 25 Nd1 Rxf1 26 Rxf1 Rf8) 24 ... Nf7! 25 Rb1 Rc8 26 b4 cxb4 27 Rxb4 Nc5 28 Rfb1 Rc7 29 Na4 Nxa4 30 Rxa4 Re8 31 Rab4 Ree7 32 Rb6 Kg7, and things end in a draw. But 23 exf5! gxf5 24 a5 would have slightly opened the kingside and left Karpov with real chances of an advantage.

20 g5! Bg7 21 Bf2 Qf4 22 Be3 Qh4 23 Qe1!

Rxb7), Spassky sacrifices his knight, to sharply change the character of the play.



30 Bxg5!

Seeing that 30 exf5 e4! 31 Bd2 exf3+ 32 Bxf3 gxf5 sharpens the play and allows the opponent some chances, Karpov takes another psychologically subtle decision. He allows the black knight to establish itself in the centre of the board, where it proves to be in splendid isolation, not influencing the play in any way. As a result, the opponent still has no hope of counterplay. In deciding whether or not to take, Karpov spent just four minutes!

It is interesting that for computer programs the continuations 30 exf5 and 30 Bxg5 are roughly equivalent. But the capture of the piece should have won more quickly, as demonstrated by a continuation of the above variation: 33 Bh5 Rc8 34 b5 g4 35 Rh1 Kg8 36 Bg6 Bd4 37 Bh7+ Kg7 38 Bh5 f4 39 Rg5+! and wins.

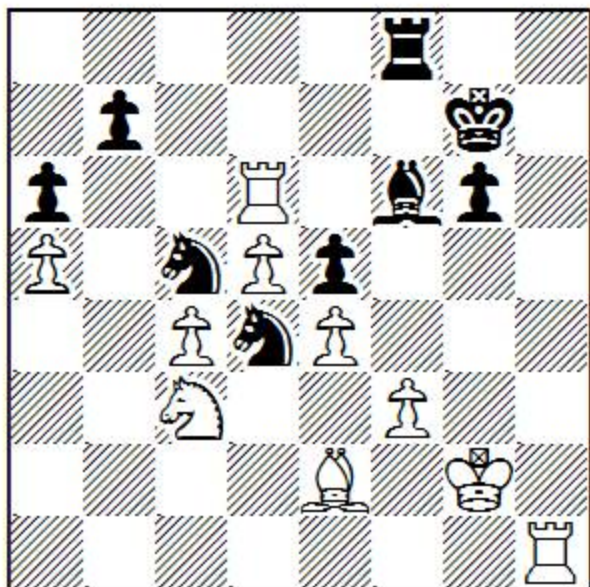
30 ... Nd4 (if 30 ... Bh6, then 31 exf5! Bxg5 32 Ne4 is extremely unpleasant) **31 bxc5 Nxc5 32 Rb6!**

The start of the decisive invasion. The d6-pawn is under fire, but again Karpov is not in a hurry to take it, first methodically strengthening the placing of his pieces.

32 ... Bf6 33 Rh1+!

The most accurate way. After 33 Rxd6 Botvinnik saw 33 ... Kg7 as being a last chance of saving the game, although it could only be a question of prolonging the suffering: 34 Rxf6 Rxf6 35 Bxf6+ Kxf6 36 Bd1 Nd3 37 Rb1 Re7 38 Ne2 g5 39 Rb6+ Kg7 40 Nxd4 exd4 41 Ba4! and wins.

33 ... Kg7 34 Bh6+ Kg8 35 Bxf8 Rxf8 36 Rxd6 Kg7



37 Bd1!

The hitherto slumbering bishop helps one of the knights to be exchanged. Its finest hour will arrive 10 moves later!

37 ... Be7 (if 37 ... Bd8, then 38 Na4 Bc7 39 Nxc5 Bxd6 40 Nxb7 Bb4 41 c5 is convincing) 38 Rb6 Bd8 39 Rb1 Rf7 40 Na4 Nd3 41 Nb6 g5 42 Nc8!

An elegant solution. Now if 42 ... g4 there is the strong reply 43 Nd6 gxf3+ 44 Kf1, and the fine-looking knight in the centre is unable to help Black.

42 ... Nc5 43 Nd6 Rd7 44 Nf5+ Nxf5 45 exf5 e4

The sealed move. Why Spassky came along to the resumption is the last mystery of this wonderful battle.

46 fxe4 Nxe4 47 Ba4 Re7 48 Rbe1! Nc5 49 Rxe7+ Bxe7 50 Bc2 Bd8 51 Ra1 Kf6 52 d6! Kd7 53 Rb1 Ke5 54 Rd1 Kf4 55 Re1 1-0

Black was punished for his indecisiveness in carrying out a basically good plan.

The score became 1-1, and Karpov gained a new lease of life. In the 4th game Spassky again did not gain any advantage against the Caro-Kann Defence and satisfied himself with a slightly inferior ending – draw on the 43rd move.

Every match has its culminating games, when the opponents come face to face, displaying all their ability. Here the 5th game was one of these. On this occasion Spassky was not afraid to engage in a crucial battle in the main direction – in an opening set-up for which the opponent was undoubtedly very heavily prepared.

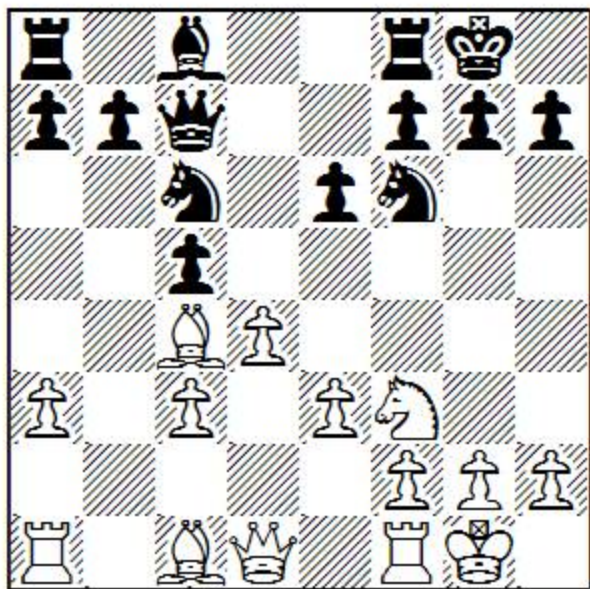
Game 59

A.Karpov-B.Spassky

Candidates Match, Leningrad 1974, 5th game

Nimzo-Indian Defence E59

1 d4 (again!) 1 ... Nf6 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Bb4 4 Nf3 (4 a3 – *Game No.4*; 4 e3 – *Game Nos.29 and 73*) 4 ... c5 5 e3 d5 6 Bd3 0-0 7 0-0 Nc6 (7 ... dxc4 – *Game No.55*) 8 a3 Bxc3 9 bxc3 dxc4 10 Bxc4 Qc7



This is one of the opening *tabiyas*, the handling of which determined the class of a player at that time. For richness of content it is comparable with the classical set-ups in the Spanish or the Queen's Gambit. The basic conflict in the position is determined by the

problematic material balance 'two bishops against bishop and knight'. Each side has his pluses (White's big pawn mass in the centre in return for the free development of Black's pieces and his defect-free pawn structure), which makes the outcome dependent only on the mastery of the two players. In our day the evaluations of many opening variations depend on the subtleties of the struggle of two bishops against bishop and knight.

11 Bd3

At that time the most fashionable continuation. Botvinnik considered 11 Be2 to be more interesting, but this is a matter of taste. After 11 ... e5 12 Qc2 Rd8 13 Bb2 Bg4! 14 dxe5 Nxe5 15 c4 a model game is Khalifman-Kramnik (Linares 2000), which incorporates the most typical middlegame features: 15 ... Nxf3+ 16 gxf3 Bh3 17 Rfd1 Qc6! 18 Qc3 Ne8 19 Kh1 Be6 20 Rg1 f6! 21 Rg3 Rd7 22 Rag1 Rad8 23 Bc1 Bf5! 24 e4 Bg6 25 h4 Nc7 with an excellent game for Black.

11 Ba2 is also often played, as, say, in Gelfand-Korchnoi (*Game No.46*). And in recent times 11 Bb2 e5 12 h3 has been popular, when after 12 ... e4 13 Nd2 Na5 14 Ba2 Bf5 15 c4! Rfe8 16 d5 Nd7 17 f4! exf3 18 Qxf3 Bg6 19 h4! White seizes the initiative (Kramnik-Tiviakov, Wijk aan Zee 2001), and therefore 12 ... Bf5 13 Qe2 Rad8 is better, maintaining the tension in the centre.

11 ... e5 12 Qc2 Re8

In the first Petrosian-Spassky match (20th matchgame, Moscow 1966) Black lost a tempo – 12 ... Bg4 13 Nxe5 Nxe5 14 dxe5 Qxe5 15 f3 Bd7, and after 16 a4 White seized the initiative.

13 Nxe5

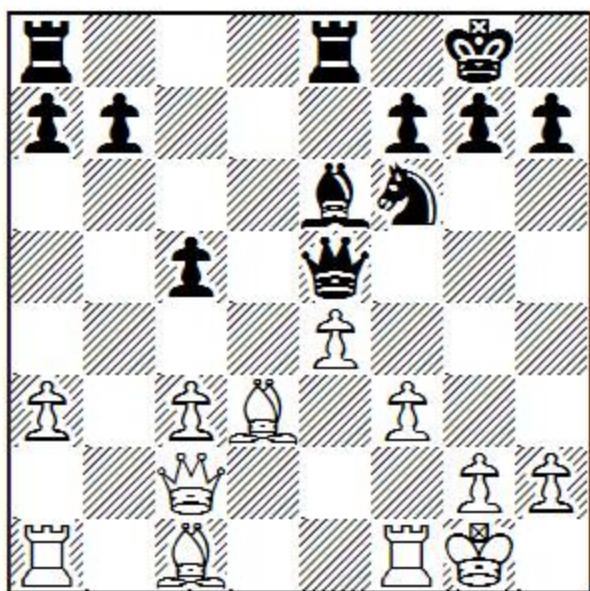
The sharp variation 13 e4 exd4 14 cxd4 Bg4! (Bronstein-Euwe, Zurich Candidates 1953) merely demonstrates the solidity of Black's defences and may lead to a pretty draw by perpetual check: 15 Qxc5 Bxf3 16 gxf3 Qd7! 17 Be3 Nxe4 18 Bxe4 Rxe4 19 fxe4 Qg4+.

Another line – 15 e5 Bxf3 16 exf6 Nxd4 17 Bxh7+ Kh8 18 fxg7+ Kxg7 19 Bb2 Rad8 20 gxf3 (at one time it was thought that 20 Rfc1 leads to a draw – 20 ... Rh8 21 Qxc5+ Qxc5 22 Rxc5 Kxh7 23 Bxd4 Rhg8, but after 20 ... Re5! 21 Bxd4 Rxd4 22 gxf3 Rg5+ 23 Kf1 Qxh2 the threat of ... Rg2 forces White to agree to a lost endgame: 24 Ke2 Qxh7) 20 ... Rh8 21 Kh1 brought White success in the game I.Sokolov-Kasparov (Wijk aan Zee 1999), but only because of 21 ... Rxh7?

Apparently, my series of seven successive wins in that tournament was destined to be broken ... And yet a quarter of a century earlier this

variation had been analysed by the Azerbaijan junior team, and I knew the correct prescription: 21 ... Kf8!! 22 Qe4?! f5! 23 Qh4 Rxh7 24 Qf6+ Ke8 25 Rfe1+ Kd7 26 Re5 Kc8 27 Bxd4 cxd4 28 Qxf5+ Kb8. In the final position things are difficult for White, and my team-mate R.Tavadian won a game in this way in the All-Union Schoolchildren's Spartakiad (1974). He remembered perfectly well 'what to do', whereas my memory unexpectedly let me down! After 21 ... Kf8 White has to think in terms of a draw, and it is still attainable: 22 Bxd4 Rxd4 23 Rfc1 Rh4 (23 ... b6 24 Kg2) 24 Qxc5+ etc.

13 ... Nxe5 14 dxe5 Qxe5 15 f3 Be6 16 e4



16 ... Rad8

Another way to equalise was later demonstrated by Spassky in his match with Portisch (4th matchgame, Geneva 1977): 16 ... c4 17 Be2 Qc5+ 18 Kh1 Nd7 19 Bf4 b5.

17 Be2

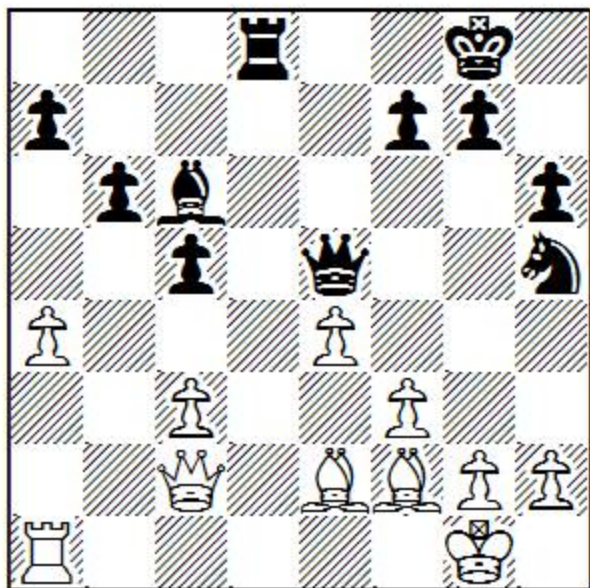
The time to advance – 17 f4?! Qc7 18 e5 – has not yet come: after 18 ... c4 19 Be2 Qc5+ 20 Kh1 Bg4! 21 Bxg4 Nxg4 22 Rb1 b6 23 h3 Nh6 Black's position is clearly better.

17 ... b6 18 a4

In the first instance White needs to activate his dark-squared bishop, which has no opponent, but this is not easy to do: 18 Be3 Nd5!, while if 18 c4 Black can choose between the double-edged 18 ... Qd4+

19 Kh1 Qxa1 20 Bb2 Qxf1+ 21 Bxf1 Nd7 22 a4 Nb8, and the more solid 18 ... Nh5 19 Bb2 Qg5 20 Kh1 Nf4 21 Bf1 h5 22 Kh1 h4.

18 ... Bd7 19 Rd1 Bc6 20 Rxd8 Rxd8 21 Be3 h6! (of course, not 21 ... Nd5? 22 Qd2! Qxc3 23 Rd1!) 22 Bf2 Nh5



White has retained the two bishops, but he has not managed to activate them, and so there is no question of him having any advantage. Black's position is solid, whereas White's pawn islands on the queenside may become a source of concern. Karpov, having no experience of playing such positions, continues to carry out a plan which appears to promise an advantage ...

23 g3

From this point onwards a certain superficiality is apparent in Karpov's decisions, as a result of which his opponent's active possibilities increase little by little, although for the moment the dynamic balance is not disturbed. Simple equality would have been retained by 23 Rd1 Rxd1+ 24 Bxd1 (Kotov), or 23 Bf1 Nf4 24 Bg3 g5 (Botvinnik).

23 ... g5!

An unexpected and brilliant reply. It transpires that the threat of f3-f4 is a phantom, whereas the weakening of the f3-e4 pawn pair is a reality.

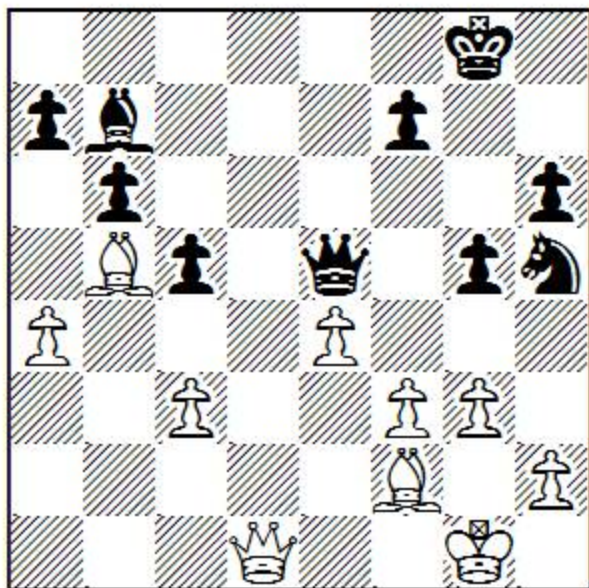
24 Bb5

White now needs to devote some attention to defence. Thus 24 Rd1 Rxd1+ 25 Qxd1 would have handed the initiative to Black: 25 ... g4! 26 Qd8+ Kg7 27 Qh4 gxf3 28 Bxf3 Nf6 29 Be3 h5, whereas getting rid of his weak pawn by 24 a5 g4 25 axb6 axb6 would have maintained parity.

24 ... Bb7! 25 Rd1

Again White does not prevent the preparation of ... g5-g4. The same exchange of rooks after the preparatory 25 a5 g4 would have ensured a simple draw: 26 Rd1 Rxd1+ 27 Qxd1 gxf3 28 axb6 axb6 29 Qd8+ Kg7 30 Qxb6 Qxc3 31 Qxc5 Qxc5 32 Bxc5 Bxe4.

25 ... Rxd1+ 26 Qxd1



26 ... Nf6!

An excellent decision. If White allows ... g5-g4, the e4-pawn may fall, exposing the long light-squared diagonal, on which the bishop at b7 will dominate. And Karpov faltered ...

27 g4

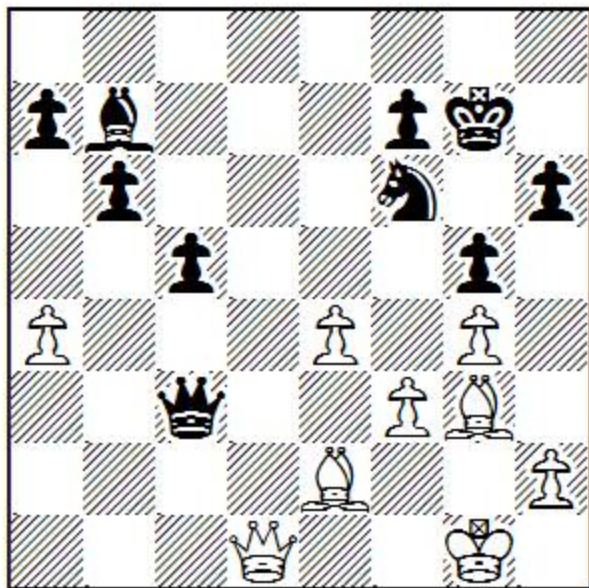
This desire to suppress the threat is too risky, whereas 27 a5 would still have prevented it (27 ... g4? 28 a6!) and enabled White to maintain equality without difficulty: 27 ... Kg7 28 a6 Bc8 29 Qd8 Be6 30 Qd3 g4 31 Bc6 gxf3 32 Qxf3, or 27 ... bxa5 28 Qd8+ Kg7 29 Qxa5 Nxe4.

27 ... Qxc3 28 Bg3?

And this is a serious mistake, which places White on the verge of defeat. The incautious 28 Qd8+ Kg7 29 Qc7? was bad on account of 29 ... Qxf3! 30 Qxb7 Nxb4 31 Bg3 Ne3 (Tal), and only by driving the queen away from the f3-pawn – 28 Be1! could White have maintained the balance: 28 ... Qb2 29 Bg3 Kg7 30 Qd6.

28 ... Kg7! 29 Be2

The queen exchange 29 Qd3 Qxd3 30 Bxd3 would have eliminated the threat to the f3-pawn, but 30 ... Bc6! would have forced White either to go in for a new, unfavourable exchange – 31 Bb5 Bxb5 32 axb5, when after 32 ... Nd7 he has an unpleasant endgame (for example, 33 Kf2 Kf6 34 f4 Nf8! 35 Ke3 Ne6 36 fxg5+ hxg5 37 Bb8 Nf8! 38 e5 Ke6 39 Bxa7 Nd7 40 Ke4 f6! and wins), or allow Black to create two connected passed pawns after 31 a5 Nd7!



29 ... Bc6?

The key moment of the game, and possibly of the entire match! After conducting a complicated middlegame splendidly and gaining real winning chances, Spassky commits a blunder – a one-move oversight.

Black would have gained a great and apparently decisive advantage by 29 ... h5! White cannot maintain his defensive construction, since 30 h3? is met by the crushing 30 ... Nxe4!, while here the saving counterattack 30 Qd6 does not in fact save him: 30 ... hxg4 31 Be5 Qe1+ 32 Bf1 Qe3+ 33 Kh1 Qxf3+ 34 Bg2 Qf2 35 Qxf6+

Qxf6 36 Bxf6+ Kxf6 37 e5+ Kxe5 38 Bxb7 c4 and wins (Tal). All that remains is to go into an endgame – 30 Be1 Qb2 31 gxh5! (31 h3 hxg4 32 hxg4 Bc6 or 31 h4 hxg4 32 hxg5 Nh5! 33 Qd6 Qc1 34 Kf1 gxf3 35 Bxf3 Nf4 36 Qf6+ Kg8 37 Qd8+ Kh7 is totally bad for White) 31 ... Nxe5 32 Qd8 Nf6 33 Qd2 Qxd2 34 Bxd2, and it is hard for White to avoid defeat: 34 ... Bc6 35 a5 Kg6 36 Bd3 Nd7 37 Bc3 f6 and Black wins.

30 Qd6!

This thrust, creating the terrible threat of 31 Be5, was obviously missed by Spassky. He is forced to exchange queens immediately, losing all hopes of success.

30 ... Qd4+ 31 Qxd4 cxd4 32 a5! bxa5!

After 32 ... Nd7 33 axb6 axb6 34 Bf2 it is not easy to draw against the awakened bishops. But with a black pawn reaching a4, the equality is obvious.

33 Be5 Kg6 34 Bxd4 Ne8 35 Bxa7 h5 36 gxh5+ Kxh5 37 Kf2 Kg6 38 Bd3 Ng7 39 Bb6 a4 40 Bc5 Ne6 41 Bd6 Kh5 ½-½

An important game! Of course, this missed opportunity vexed and disappointed Spassky. Even so, being at that time the most experienced match fighter in the world, he was able to compose himself and arrive at the next game still full of optimism. This was another important, key game. On the 23rd move Karpov gave his opponent another surprise ...

‘Even when I levelled the score, Spassky still did not understand what was happening and he remained in a state of Olympian certainty of his own superiority and overall success,’ Karpov recalls. ‘Only the 6th game awakened him. I realised this from looking at him: this was already a different Spassky – seriously wounded, flustered, not understanding what was happening.’

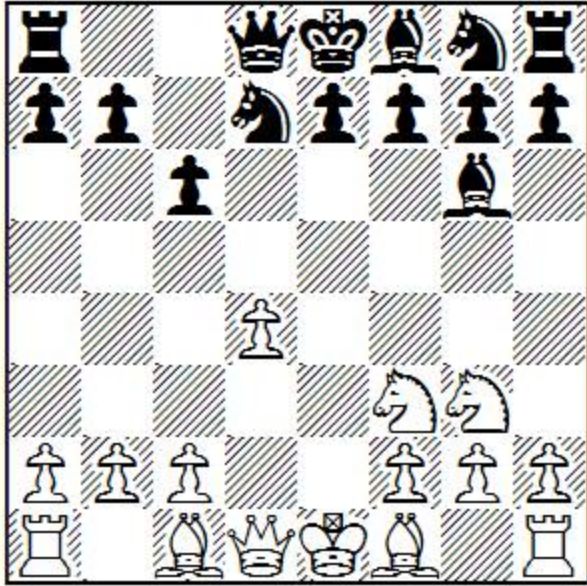
Game 60

B.Spassky-A.Karpov

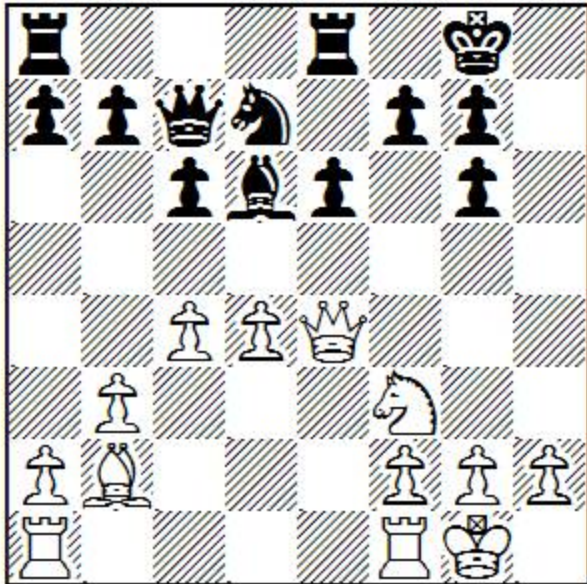
Candidates Match, Leningrad 1974, 6th game

Caro-Kann Defence B18

1 e4 c6 (of course!) 2 d4 d5 3 Nc3 dxe4 4 Nxe4 Bf5 5 Ng3 Bg6 6 Nf3 (6 h4! – Game No.62) 6 ... Nd7



7 Bd3 e6 8 0-0 Ngf6 9 c4 Bd6 10 b3 0-0 11 Bb2 Qc7
 Or 11 ... c5 12 Bxg6 hxg6 13 Re1 Qc7 14 dxc5 Bxc5 15 Qc2 Rfd8
 16 Ne4 Nxe4 17 Qxe4 $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ (2nd game).
 12 Bxg6 hxg6 13 Qe2 Rfe8 14 Ne4 Nxe4 15 Qxe4



Spassky's opening repairs had clearly been delayed, and for already the third 'White' game he was forced to play a tedious role in an alien scenario. To force the opponent to play what he does not like is a great achievement in a match struggle.

The resulting middlegame does not promise any great adventures. Neither side has any weaknesses, or any difficulties in the development of their forces. For the moment no clashes are anticipated, and unhurried manoeuvring is perfectly logical.

15 ... Be7

Black continues his waiting strategy, emphasising the solidity of his position. He even avoids the logical freeing move 15 ... e5. If now 16 c5, then Botvinnik's suggestion 16 ... Be7! 17 Nxe5 Nxe5 18 dxe5 Bxc5 is good, while after 16 Rae1! Nf6 17 Qh4 one can agree with Karpov's opinion that White has a slight initiative, although after 17 ... e4 18 Ng5 Bf4 19 Re2 e3! 20 fxe3 (20 f3 b5! 21 g3 Bxg5 22 Qxg5 bxc4 23 bxc4 Qb6 24 Bc3 Qa6 with equality) 20 ... Rxe3 21 Ref2 Bxg5 22 Qxg5 Re7! it gradually fades: 23 Qh4 Rae8 24 Rxf6 gxf6 25 d5 g5 26 Qf2 cxd5 27 Bxf6 Re6 28 cxd5 Rd6 29 Bxg5 Rxd5.

16 Rad1 Rad8 17 Rfe1 Qa5!

This activation could also have been carried out after 17 ... Bf6 18 Bc1 (if now 18 ... e5, then Botvinnik's reply 19 Bb2! is strong): 18 ... Qa5 19 a4 Qf5 with equality.

18 a3 Qf5 19 Qe2

After the exchange of queens White has no chances of an advantage, but now it transpires that the manoeuvre of the black queen was a link in an elegant activation plan.

19 ... g5! 20 h3

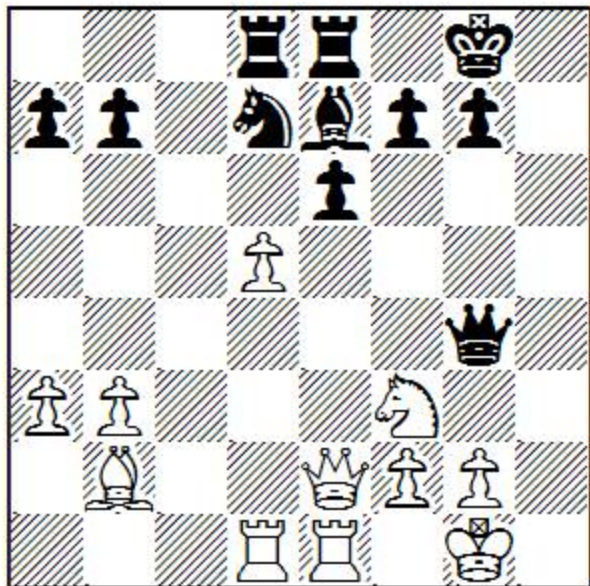
Spassky made this move very quickly, deferring the d4-d5 breakthrough until better times. And indeed, after 20 d5 exd5 White is not promised any benefits by either 21 Nd4 Qh7 (or 21 ... Qe4! Botvinnik) 22 cxd5 cxd5 23 Qb5 Bd6!, or 21 cxd5 g4! (Karpov) 22 Nd4 Qxd5 23 Qxg4 Nf6.

20 ... g4 21 hxg4 Qxg4 22 d5?!

At first sight a timely advance, since after the double pawn exchange it will be advantageous for White to give up his queen for two rooks. Karpov's evaluation was very deep: 'White's position is slightly freer thanks to the c4-d4 pawn pair, but the opening of the centre deprives him of this, perhaps his only plus. 22 Rd3 Bf6 23 Re3 was

better.' I think, nevertheless, that here too after 23 ... Qh5 one can talk about equality.

22 ... cxd5 23 cxd5



23 ... e5!!

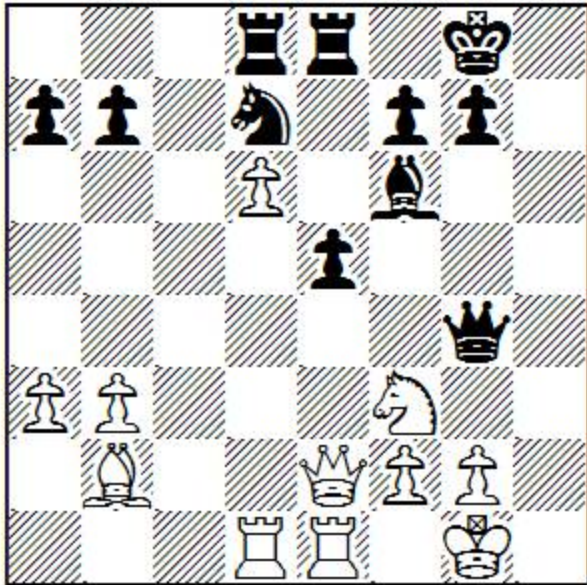
One of the best moves in the match. I remember it made an enormous impression on me. Its strength was clearly underestimated by Spassky, who was possibly hoping for 23 ... Bd6? 24 dxe6 Rxe6 25 Qxe6! fxe6 26 Rxd6.

Of course, the pawn sacrifice is only imaginary: 24 Nxe5?! Qxe2 25 Rxe2 Bd6 26 Rde1 Nxe5 27 Bxe5 Bxa3, but Black leaves his opponent with a seemingly powerful passed pawn in the centre. Alas, only seemingly: it will be securely blocked by the knight, and in the endgame it will become an appreciable weakness. This method of 'circumventing' a passed d6-pawn in the Grünfeld Defence was one that I used in my Seville match against Karpov (1987), but for the mid-1970s such an interpretation was a revelation, an important step forward in the understanding of chess.

24 d6!?

After 24 Qb5 there is a very simple way to equalise: 24 ... Bc5! 25 Nxe5 Nxe5 26 Bxe5 Bxf2+! 27 Kxf2 Rxe5 28 Rxe5 Qf4+ 29 Kg1 Qxe5.

24 ... Bf6



25 Nd2?!

Again Spassky is inferior to his opponent in his evaluation of the position – in matchplay such a thing is dispiriting and takes away your confidence. He overestimates the strength of the d6-pawn and avoids the equal middlegame after 25 Qb5, where his passed pawn would have restricted Black's forces, for example: 25 ... e4 26 Nh2 Qe6 27 Bxf6 Nxf6 28 Qxb7 Rd7 29 Qb4 Nd5 30 Qc5 Rxd6. In the endgame, however, it is transformed into ballast! But in order to show this, great accuracy is required of Black, and Karpov displays this.

25 ... Qxe2 26 Rxe2 Rc8! 27 Ne4

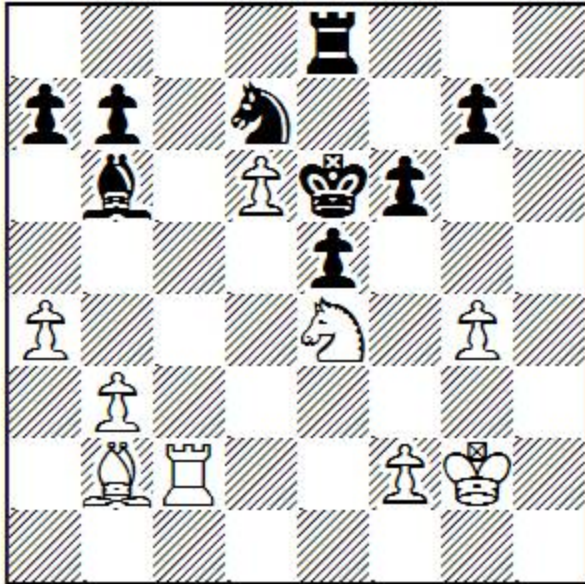
Again a questionable decision: White drives the bishop to d8, where it is ready for play on both flanks. It would have been better to block the c-file by 27 Nc4! Bg5 28 a4 and to maintain equality after 28 ... f6 29 g3 Kf7 30 Kg2, since it is hard for Black to strengthen his position.

27 ... Bd8 28 g4 f6 29 Kg2 Kf7 30 Rc1?!

Karpov attaches an exclamation mark to this move: control of the c-file! But Tal logically objects: 'White should not have exchanged a pair of rooks: although he now occupies the c-file, there are no invasion squares there for the rook. The immediate 30 a4 should have been considered. With all four rooks on the board, it would be dangerous for the black king to approach the d6-pawn on account of the threat of f2-f4.'

30 ... Bb6 31 Rec2 Rxc2 32 Rxc2 Ke6 33 a4

White decides to include his bishop in the defence of the d6-pawn. The advance of the other pawn promised less: 33 b4 a5 34 bxa5 Bxa5 35 Kg3 b5, or 33 ... Kd5 34 Kf3 g6 35 Rd2+ Bd4 36 Ng3 Rc8.



33 ... a5!

This is by no means prophylaxis, but the start of a deep plan of playing for a win. White has no way of strengthening his position, but the same cannot be said about Black.

34 Ba3 Rb8!

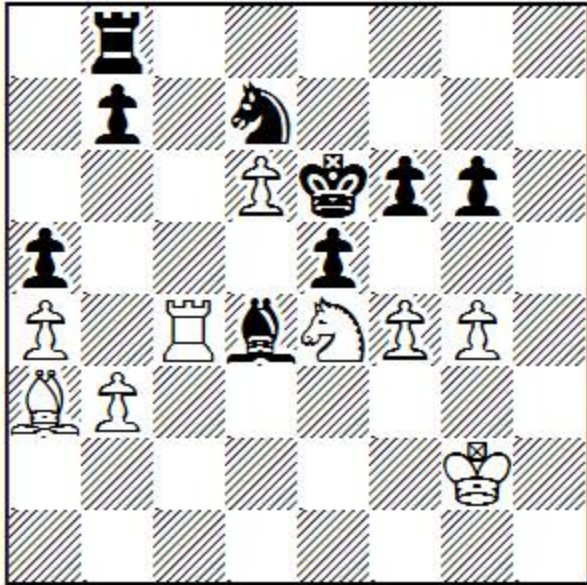
It turns out that Karpov is preparing ... b7-b5, which is hard to prevent. Thus if 35 Nc3?! the rook advantageously turns back – 35 ... Rc8.

The rock wants to help the light carry out the measure of 40

35 ... Bd4! 36 f4!

36 ... g6

Black has to agree to the exchange of a pair of pawns, since in the event of 36 ... b5 37 axb5 Rxb5 White succeeds in carrying out an even more favourable exchanging operation: 38 f5+ Kd5 39 Nc3+! Bxc3 40 Rxc3, gaining excellent drawing chances.



37 Ng3?!

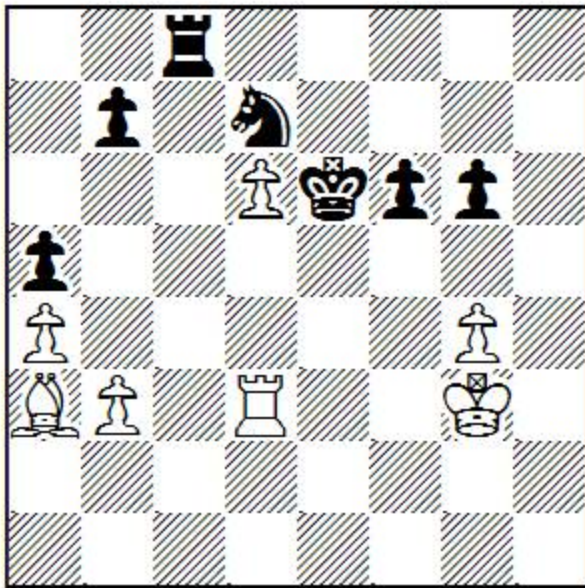
After the logical 37 fxe5 Bxe5 38 Rc7 it would have been not so easy for Black to demonstrate the reality of his advantage. If 38 ... b5 there would have followed 39 Ra7 b4 40 Bc1 Rc8 41 Be3 Rc2+ 42 Kf1! Rb2 43 Nc5+ Nxc5 44 Bxc5 with good chances of a draw: 44 ... Rxb3 45 Ke2! Rb2 46 Kd3!, or 44 ... Bxd6 45 Ra6 Rd2 46 Ke1 Rd5 47 Bb6 Bg3 48 Bf2 Rd6 49 Rxa5.

After the more subtle 38 ... b6! 39 g5! f5 40 Nd2 the use of the computer as a guiding sparring-partner can lead to an amusing drawing finale: 40 ... b5 41 Nf3 b4 42 Rxd7 bxa3 43 Re7+ Kxd6 44 Rxe5 a2 45 Re1 Rxb3 46 Ra1 Rb2+ 47 Kg3 Kc5 48 Ne5 Kb4 49 Nxc6 Kb3 50 Nf4 Rb1 51 Rxa2 Kxa2 52 g6 Ka3 53 g7 Rb8 54 Ne6 Rg8 55 Kf4 Kxa4 56 Kxf5 Kb4 57 Kf6 Kc4 58 Nf4 a4 59 Ne2 Kd3 60 Nc1+ Kc2 61 Na2 Kb2 62 Nb4 a3 63 Kf7 Rb8 64 g8Q Rxg8 65 Kxg8 Kb3 66 Nd3 Kc3 67 Nc1 Kc2 68 Na2 Kb3 69 Nc1+ Kb2 70 Nd3+. However, 40 ... Bf4! 41 Nf3 Be3 nevertheless leaves Black with chances of success.

37 ... exf4!

Again Karpov squeezes the maximum out of the situation. After the natural 37 ... b5 38 f5+ gxf5 39 gxf5+ Kd5 White would have gained a draw: 40 Rc7 b4 41 Bxb4 Rxb4 42 Rxd7 Rxb3 43 Nh5! e4 44 Re7 (Spassky), or 40 ... bxa4!? 41 bxa4 Rb3 42 Rxd7 Rxa3 43 Nh5 e4 44 Re7 Ra2+ 45 Kh3 Kxd6 46 Rxe4 Kd5 47 Re6.

38 Rxd4 fxg3 39 Kxg3 Rc8 (control of the c-file has passed to Black, and this immediately makes the defence more difficult) **40 Rd3**



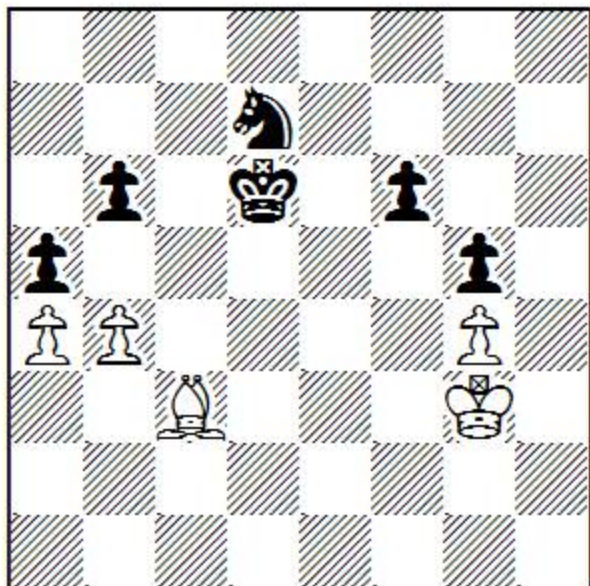
40 ... g5!

I think that Spassky must have underestimated the strength of this move, the last one before the time control. Black secures a solid post for his knight at e5 and prepares to play ... b7-b5. Although there is very little material left on the board, it is not easy for White to defend.

41 Bb2 b6 42 Bd4

In the analysis of the adjourned position 42 Rc3 provoked arguments among the experts. Karpov's recommendation 42 ... Rh8 can hardly give Black anything. There only remains the exchange of rooks – 42 ... Rxc3+ 43 Bxc3. Now the endgame after 43 ... Nc5 44 Kf3 Nxb3 45 d7 Kxd7 46 Bxf6 Nc5 47 Bxg5 Nxa4 48 Ke4 was rightly judged by Botvinnik to be drawn, since the knight will be unable to help the king with the advance of the pawns, for example: 48 ... Kc6 49 Kd4 Nc5 50 Be3 b5 51 g5 Ne6 52 Kc3 Kd5 53 g6.

Botvinnik (like all the later commentators) also considered the ending arising after 43 ... Kxd6 44 b4 to be drawn.



Analysis diagram

There's no denying that his variation is elegant and convincing: 44 ... axb4 45 Bxb4+ Kd5 46 a5 b5 47 a6 Kc6 48 Ba5! Nc5! 49 Kf3 Nxa6 50 Bc3 b4 51 Bxf6 b3 52 Ke2 Nc5 53 Kd1 Ne4 54 Bd8 Kd7 55 Ba5, but the trouble is that it contains a mistake on the very first move! In the diagram position no one noticed the pretty 44 ... b5!!, enabling Black to create a dangerous passed pawn.

After 45 axb5 the winning method is simple: 45 ... a4! 46 b6 a3 47 b5 a2 48 Kf3 Ne5+ 49 Kg3 (49 Ke4 Nxc4 50 Kf5 Ne3+ etc.) 49 ... Kd7 50 Bb2 Kc8 51 Ba1 Kb7 52 Bd4 Nd3 53 Bxf6 Kxb6 54 Kf3 Nc5 55 Bb2 Kxb5 56 Ke3 Kc4 57 Kd2 Nb3+ 58 Ke3 Kd5.

The win is more difficult when the white pawn is more remote – 45 bxa5 bxa4:

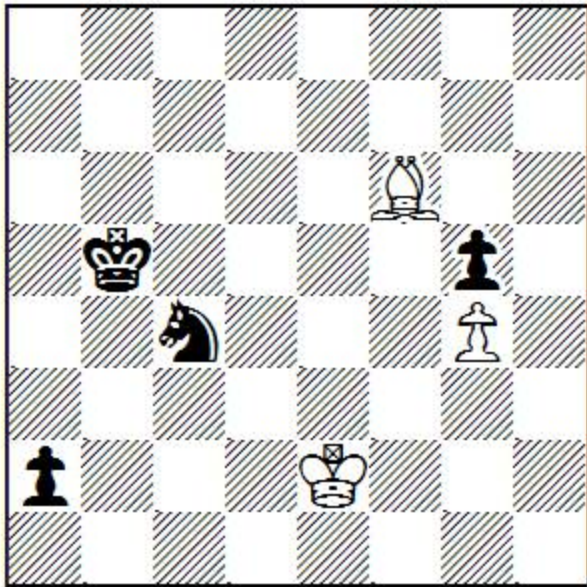
1) if 46 a6 Kc7 47 Kf3 Black wins most simply by 47 ... Ne5+ 48 Ke4 Nxc4 49 Kf5 Nh6+!, for example: 50 Kxf6 g4 51 Bd4 a3 52 Kg5 a2 53 Kf4 Kc6 54 a7 Kb7 55 Ba1 Kxa7 56 Kg3 Kb6, or 50 Kg6 g4 51 Kxh6 g3 52 Kh5 g2 53 Bd4 a3 54 Kg4 a2;

2) a fascinating race of two black pawns can be observed in the event of 46 Kf3 Ne5+! 47 Ke4 Nxc4 with the sequel 48 a6 Kc6 49 Kf5 Nh6+! 50 Kxf6 g4 51 Kg5 a3! 52 Bd4 g3 53 Kf4 g2 54 Kf3 Nf5, or the

somewhat more complicated 48 Kf5 Ne3+ 49 Ke4 Nd5 50 Bb2 Ke6! 51 a6 f5+ 52 Kf3 Nc7 53 a7 Kd5 54 Bc1 (54 Bf6 g4 55 Kf4 a3 55 Kxf5 g3 56 Be5 a2!) 54 ... f4! 55 Bb2 Na8! 56 Ba3 Ke5 57 Kg4 Ke4! 58 Bc5 f3 59 Kg3 g4 60 Kf2 Kd5 61 Be7 Kc4 62 Kg3 Kb3 and wins;

3) the win is the most difficult if White tries by 46 Bb4+ Kc6 47 Kf3 not to allow the black pawn to reach a3. Now chasing after the a5-pawn throws away the win: 47 ... Kb5? 48 Be7! Kxa5 (or 48 ... Ne5+ 49 Kg3 Nf7 50 Kf3! Kxa5 51 Ke4 Nh6 52 Bxf6 a3 53 Bxg5 Nxg4 54 Bc1 a2 55 Bb2) 49 Ke4 Kb5 50 Kd5 Ne5 51 Bxf6 Nxg4 52 Bxg5 a3 53 Bc1 a2 54 Bb2 Kb4 55 Kd4 Kb3 56 Ba1 Kc2 57 Kc4 Nf2 58 Kb4 Kb1 59 Bd4 Nd3+ 60 Kb3 with a draw.

The problem is solved by an unexpected knight manoeuvre: 47 ... Ne5+! 48 Kg3 Nc4! 49 Be7 (49 Bc3 a3 50 Bxf6 a2 51 a6 Kb6 etc. leads to the same positions) 49 ... a3 50 a6 a2 51 Bxf6 Kb6 52 Kf3 Kxa6 53 Ke2 (53 Ke4 Ka5 54 Kf5 Ka4 55 Kxg5 Kb3 56 Ba1 Kc2 57 Kf4 Kb1 58 g5 Kxa1 59 g6 Ne5! 60 g7 Ng6+ 61 Kg5 Ne7 62 Kf6 Ng8+ 63 Kf7 Kb2 64 Kxg8 a1Q and wins) 53 ... Kb5!



Analysis diagram

54 Kd1 allows Black an easy win: 54 ... Ne3+ 55 Kc1 Nxg4 56 Bg7 Nf2 57 Kb2 g4 58 Kxa2 (forced, since, alas, 58 Be5 is not possible) 58 ... g3! 59 Be5 g2 60 Bh2 Kc4 61 Kb2 Kd3! 62 Kc1 Ke2 63 Kc2 Kf1 64 Kd2 Ng4.

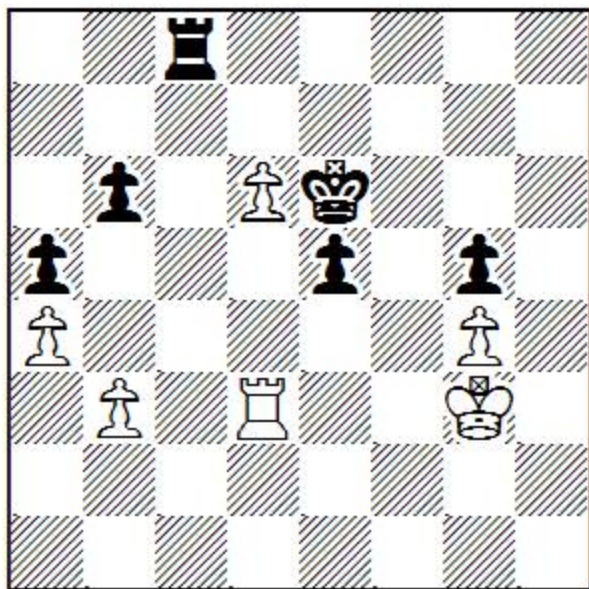
But in the event of 54 Kd3 he has to find the study-like 54 ... Na3!!, preventing the king from approaching the a2-pawn. Then neither 55 Kd2 Kc4 56 Kc1 Kb3 57 Bg7 Nc4 58 Bf6 Ne3, nor the desperate 55 Ke4 Kc4 56 Kf5 Kd3 57 Kxg5 Nc4 58 Kh6 Kc2 59 Ba1 Kb1 saves White from defeat.

42 ... Rc6 43 Bc3 Rc5?

All the commentators thought that the pawn capture 43 ... Rxd6 44 Rxd6+ Kxd6 would have allowed White good drawing chances after 45 b4. It is probable that both players came to the same conclusion in their adjournment analysis. However, 45 ... b5! leads to the position that was examined earlier. Thus a serious analytical error could have cancelled out the results of Black's previous fine play.

44 Kg2 Rc8 45 Kg3 Ne5! 46 Bxe5 fxe5

Evidently judging the bishop vs. knight ending to be drawn, Karpov pins his hopes on the rook ending – and he is not mistaken, as shown by the following mistake, the ‘home’ origin of which was also quite probable.



47 b4?

An imperceptible error, but it loses the game. In trying to reduce the remaining material to the minimum, White presents his opponent with a highly important tempo. As shown by Spassky, White would also have lost after 47 Kf3 Rd8 48 b4 (or 48 Ke4 Rxd6 49 Rxd6+ Kxd6 50 Kf5

Kd5 51 Kxg5 e4 52 Kf4 Kd4 53 g5 e3 54 g6 e2 55 g7 e1Q 56 g8Q Qf1+ 57 Kg4 Qg1+) 48 ... axb4! 49 Rb3 Rf8+! 50 Ke3 Rf4! 51 Rd3 Rxd6 52 d7 Rg3+ etc.

It would appear that only the study-like 47 Kf2! Rd8 48 Rf3! would have saved White. Spassky cuts short his analysis in the position after 48 ... Rxd6 49 Rf5 Rd3 50 Rxd6 Rxb3 51 Rg6+ Kd5 52 g5 with the evaluation 'with counterplay for the pawn and drawing chances'. In fact, 52 ... Rb4 53 Ke3 Rxa4 54 Rxb6 Re4+ 55 Kf3 Rf4+ 56 Ke3 a4 57 g6 Rg4 58 Ra6 leads to a clear draw.

47 ... e4! 48 Rd4

There is no longer any way to save the game. It is bad to play either 48 Rb3 Kxd6 49 bxa5 bxa5 50 Kf2 Kd5 51 Ke3 Rc5 52 Ra3 (52 Rb7 Rc3+ 53 Ke2 Ke5 54 Rb5+ Kf4 55 Rxa5 Rc2+) 52 ... Ke5 53 Rb3 Rd5 54 Rc3 Rd3+!, or 48 Rd1 Rd8 49 bxa5 bxa5 50 Re1! Ke5! 51 Rf1, which, according to analysis by Spassky, would have given a straightforward technical win after both 51 ... Rxd6! 52 Rf5+ Kd4, and 51 ... e3! 52 Rf5+ Ke4, for example: 53 Rxd6 Rxd6 54 Rg8 Rd1 55 Re8+ Kd3 56 Rd8+ Kc2 57 Rc8+ Kd2 58 Rd8+ Ke1 59 Ra8 e2 60 Rxa5 Rd3+! 61 Kf4 Kf2 62 Re5 Rf3+ 63 Kg5 Re3.

48 ... Ke5 49 Rd1 axb4 50 Rb1 Rc3+ 51 Kf2 Rd3 52 d7 Rxd7 53 Rxb4 Rd6 54 Ke3 Rd3+ 55 Ke2 Ra3 56 Rxb6 Rxa4 0-1

Very subtle play, although not without its faults.

Karpov took the lead: 2-1. There is no doubt that the ex-champion's mistakes in the 5th game and especially the 6th undermined his belief in success and brought the ultimate finish closer.

'After missing a draw on the resumption of the 6th game, the distressed Spassky was completely outplayed in the 7th,' writes Roshal. 'Either the closeness of the desired conclusion affected Karpov, or else his youth told: at one point he made an impulsive decision, and in the adjourned position he no longer had a win.'

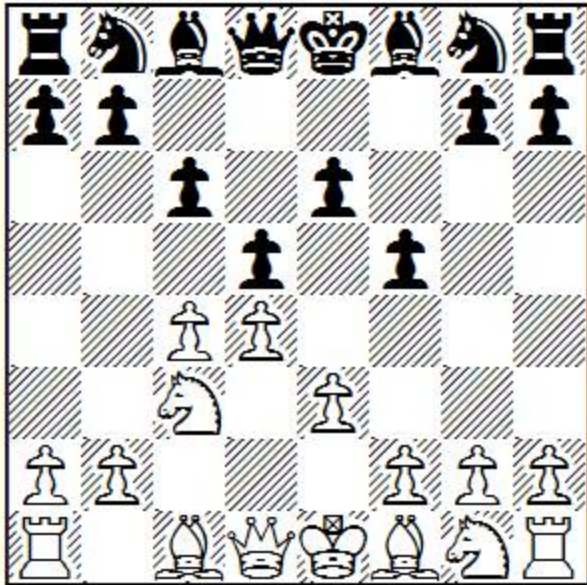
Game 61

A.Karpov-B.Spassky

Candidates Match, Leningrad 1974, 7th game

Dutch Defence A85

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 c6 4 e3 f5



In his search for schemes unfamiliar to his opponent, Spassky placed his choice on the strategically risk 'stonewall' set-up, which had not previously occurred in his games. And again his choice proved unsuccessful. Spassky nullified his advantage in the experience of playing typical middlegame positions, and Karpov was able to handle a standard position in this variation by using general considerations.

5 f4

'Karpov remains faithful to his manner of play – in the first instance to restrict his opponent's possibilities.' (Botvinnik)

5 ... Nf6 6 Nf3 Be7 7 Be2 0-0 8 0-0 Ne4

Botvinnik considered the knight leap into the centre to be over-hasty and suggested immediately making the bishop manoeuvre Bc8-d7-e8-h5(g6): 8 ... Bd7 9 Ne5 Be8. Nearly 20 years later Karpov again played this line, and Black equalised by solving the problem of his bishop's development in another way: 8 ... b6 9 Qc2 Bb7 10 cxd5 cxd5 11 Bd2 Nc6 12 a3 Ne4 13 Rfc1 Rc8 14 Qd1 Qd7 15 Be1 Rc7 16 Rc2 Nxc3 17 Rxc3 Rfc8 18 Rac1 Bd6 19 Qa4 Nb8 (Karpov-Ivanchuk, Tilburg 1993).

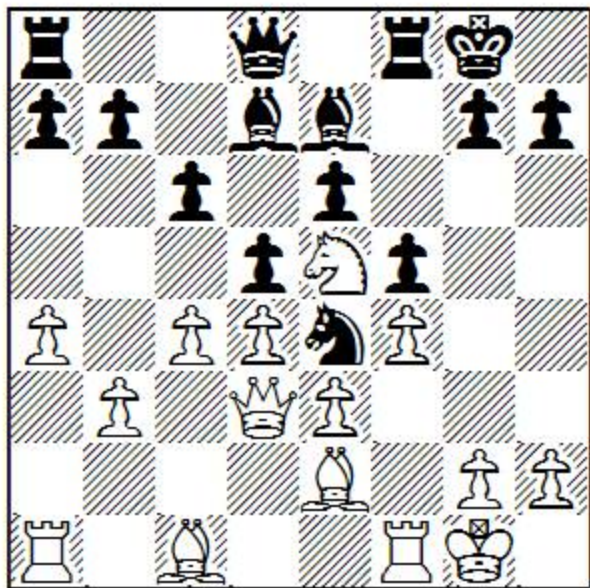
9 Qc2 Nd7 10 b3 Nxc3

Instead of this also premature exchange, which merely restricts Black's possibilities, he should have played 10 ... Ndf6.

11 Qxc3 Nf6 12 Ne5! Bd7

This seemingly natural move allows White to prepare the advantageous exchange of the dark-squared bishops. The manoeuvre of the bishop via e8 to h5 should have been made after prophylaxis – 12 ... Bd6 13 a4 Qe7!

13 a4! Ne4?! (this move, the fruit of half an hour's thought, was condemned by Botvinnik, who thought that activity in the centre with 13 ... c5 was preferable) 14 Qd3!



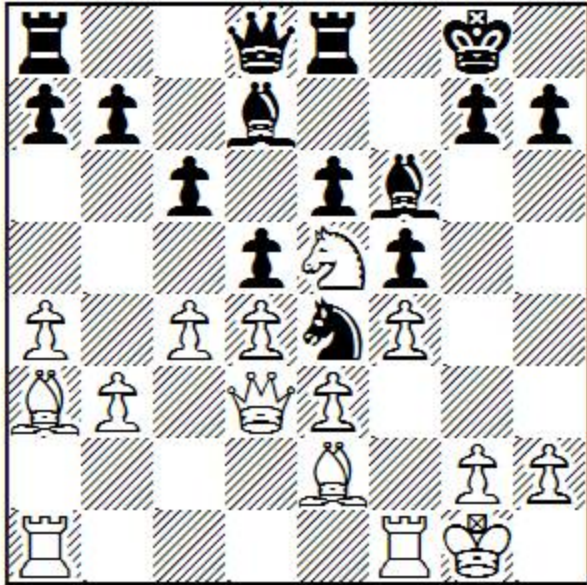
14 ... Bf6?

Black decides to give up his bishop for the formidable knight, but after this the white bishop becomes complete master of the dark-squared diagonals! The variation 14 ... Be8 15 Ba3 Bxa3 16 Rxa3 a5 17 Bf3 would also have led to an unpromising situation where, apart from his spatial advantage, White would have the possibility of attacking the opponent's central outpost with his bishop, whereas Black would have to reconcile himself to an 'eternal' knight at e5.

Therefore 14 ... c5 was now necessary, initiating play in the centre and activating the passive bishop at d7. After 15 cxd5 exd5 16 dxc5 Nxc5 17 Qxd5+ Be6 18 Qxd8 Rfxd8 19 Bc4 Bxc4 20 bxc4 Rac8 Black would have compensation for the pawn, while in the event of 16 Ba3 Be6 17 dxc5 Nxc5 18 Qd1 Ne4 19 Bxe7 Qxe7 20 Qd4 Rfc8 White would retain an obvious positional advantage, but Black's position would be quite tenable.

15 Ba3 Re8

Hopes of creating counterplay were promised by an operation in the centre: 15 ... dxc4 16 bxc4?! c5 17 Bf3 Bxe5 18 fxe5 Bc6, but 16 Nxc4! c5 17 Rad1 would have immediately extinguished Black's activity.



16 Bh5! g6

'Now Spassky's light-squared bishop is severely restricted, and after the inevitable opening of the h-file the g6-pawn will become a good target for White to attack.' (Botvinnik). In addition, two more dark squares are weakened – f6 and h6.

17 Bf3 Bxe5

'This leads to a lost position.' (Botvinnik). But 17 ... b5, a suggestion by the master Cherepkov to activate the sleeping bishop, would not have solved Black's problems after the cool-headed 18 Bxe4! dxe4 19 Qe2.

18 dxe5! h5

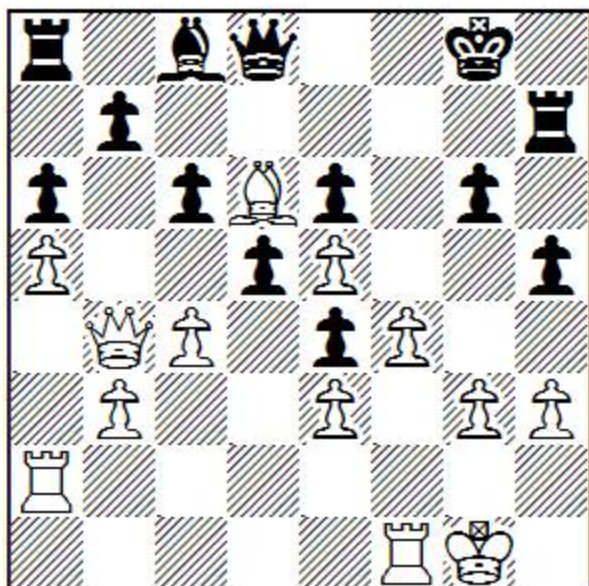
Forestalling g2-g4, but Karpov emphasises the drawbacks of this advance with a timely exchange.

19 Bxe4! fxe4 (after 19 ... dxe4? White would have gained the d-file) **20 Qd2 Kf7 21 a5 Rh8 22 Bd6! Rh7 23 Qb4**

Karpov consistently carries out his containment strategy. Now he deprives the black pieces of their mobility, forcing them to vegetate on

the back two ranks.

23 ... Bc8 24 Ra2 Kg8 25 h3 a6 26 g3



White's plan becomes clear: he wants to place his queen's rook at g2, take his king to the queenside, and then destroy the enemy king's defences by g3-g4 and f4-f5.

26 ... Bd7!

Spassky decides to try and divert the opponent from carrying out his plan, and Karpov – perhaps wrongly – decides to take a pawn which was merely preventing Black from coordinating his pieces.

27 Qxb7 Be8 28 Qb4 Raa7! 29 Rg2

29 Qb6! Qa8 30 Qd4 Rab7 31 b4 was stronger – the black pieces occupy tragic-comic positions, and White is threatening also to destroy the queenside by b4-b5.

29 ... Rab7 30 Qc3 Rbf7 (switching powerful support to the kingside) 31 Bc5 g5!

'The last chance: after all, within a few moves the game will be adjourned, and resistance after adjournment analysis will be a hopeless matter.' (Botvinnik)

32 Bb6?

'Here, for virtually the only time in the entire match,' writes Botvinnik, 'Spassky's opponent shows that he is only 23 – a young age for events of such intensity. The realisation that his position was won

prevented Karpov from calmly evaluating the situation' – and after relaxing he transposed moves in his intended plan. The safest and strongest way was the timely exchange 32 cxd5!, forcing Black to open the c-file: 32 ... cxd5 (32 ... exd5? 33 e6!) 33 Bb6 Qb8 34 Rc1 with an extra pawn and an enormous positional advantage.

32 ... Qd7 33 cxd5 exd5!

The queen, after being driven to d7, has made this capture possible, and White unexpectedly has to think about the safety of his king.

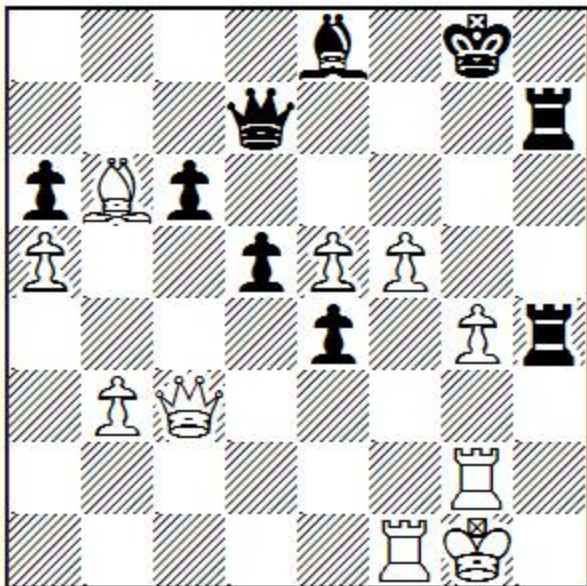
34 g4 hxg4 35 hxg4

Tal suggested that Karpov went in for this position, considering it to be won on account of the unavoidable f4-f5.

35 ... gxf4!

The opening of the position is Black's only chance. The degree of risk does not play any role – things can't be any worse than they are.

36 exf4 Rh4 37 f5 Rfh7



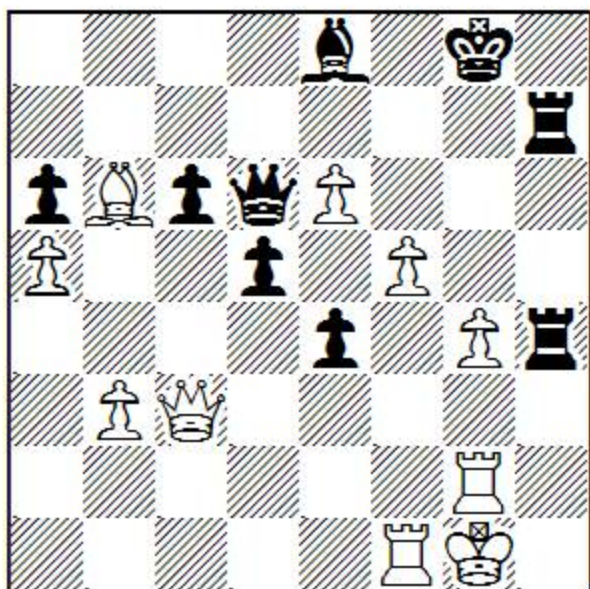
For the first time in the game Black has gained the opportunity to create some threats, and Karpov, realising his error, became nervous and sank into thought for 15 minutes. The decision he came to was by no means the best and probably indicates that he was somewhat rattled.

38 e6?

It is hard to condemn a move made in time-trouble. It all seems correct: yes, the black queen gains the prospect of a raid into White's position, but Karpov has planned a manoeuvre aimed at ensuring the safety of his king. However, the idea proves to have a flaw.

Meanwhile, in the nervy atmosphere that had suddenly arisen on the board, the bold removal of the king from the danger zone – 38 Kf2! – would have given White good winning chances. After 38 ... Rh3 an extremely intricate situation results from 39 Be3 Qe7 40 Ke1 c5! 41 Qxc5 Qxe5 42 Bd4 Rc7! 43 Qb6 Rc1+ 44 Kd2 Qc7. There only remains 39 Rg3 Rh2+ 40 Ke3! (this way, into the hail of bullets! The cautious 40 Ke1? would even lose: 40 ... c5! 41 Bxc5 Qb5 42 Rf2 Rh1+ 43 Kd2 R7h2 44 Kc2 Qf1! 45 Qd2 Qb1+ 46 Kc3 Rc1+ 47 Kb4 Rc4+ 48 Ka3 Qa1+ 49 Qa2 Qc1+ 50 Qb2 Ra4+!) 40 ... R7h3 41 Kf4!! It is surprising, but this square is the most comfortable shelter for the king. Here it not at all easy to get at – at any event, I was unable to do so in my analysis. And meanwhile the white pawns are ready to begin advancing ...

38 ... Qd6



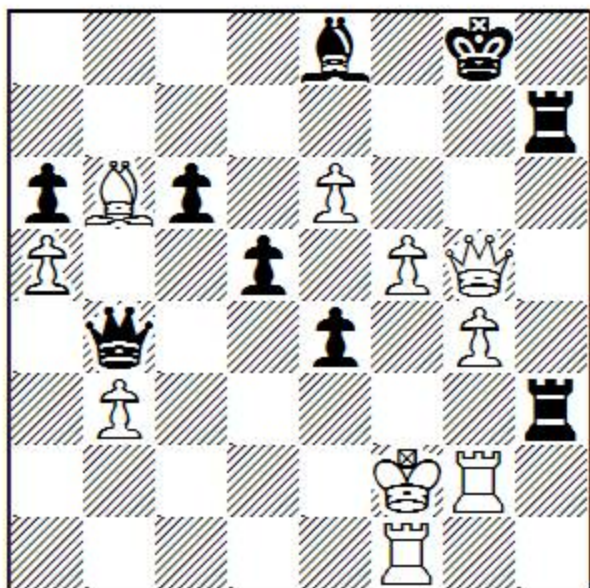
39 Qg3

The computer optimistically evaluates the position after 39 Be3!? Rh2 40 Qd2, calculating (I stress the word 'calculating') that White still has winning chances. However, it is not easy for me to confirm this,

even after making an analysis, which, incidentally, it is difficult to do in this position, because of the abundance of possibilities for both sides.

39 ... Rh1+ 40 Kf2 Qb4! (unexpectedly it transpires that this manoeuvre saves Black) 41 Qe3 (the sealed move) ½-½

The players agreed a draw without resuming the game. Indeed, in this sharp position neither side can afford to take a risk, and analysis shows that a draw is inevitable. The finish to this splendid chess thriller could have been: 41 ... R1h3 42 Rg3 Rh2+ 43 Rg2 R2h3 44 Qg5+.



Analysis diagram

The last test before acknowledging the draw. 44 ... Rg7? looks very tempting, especially since in the event of the obvious 45 Qd8? Black even wins with the cunning 45 ... c5! – it turns out that the white pieces are unable to save their king: 46 Qxd5 e3+! 47 Kg1 e2! 48 Rxe2 Bc6!! 49 Qxc6 Qd4+ 50 Rff2 Qd1+. On the other hand, after 45 Qc1! it transpires that Black has moved his rook to g7 in vain. The main threat is 46 f6 (for example, 45 ... d4 46 f6!), and no effective way of parrying it is apparent. In the variation 45 ... Rc3 46 Qd2 Rf3+ 47 Kg1! (47 Ke1 Rc3!) 47 ... Qxd2 48 Rxd2 Rxc3+ 49 Rg2 White loses a pawn, but the inevitable f5-f6 will cost Black his bishop. But after 44 ... Kh8! White, not making the same mistake twice (45 Rd1? c5!, and it is Black who wins!), gives perpetual check – 45 Qf6+ Kg8 46 Qg5+.

This was the prelude to the last turning point in the match: fate granted Spassky a miraculous escape and a chance finally to try and breach the super-solid Caro-Kann Defence. He arrived for the 8th game in a fighting mood, but his young opponent did not lose his customary composure and again showed himself to be a brilliant defender.

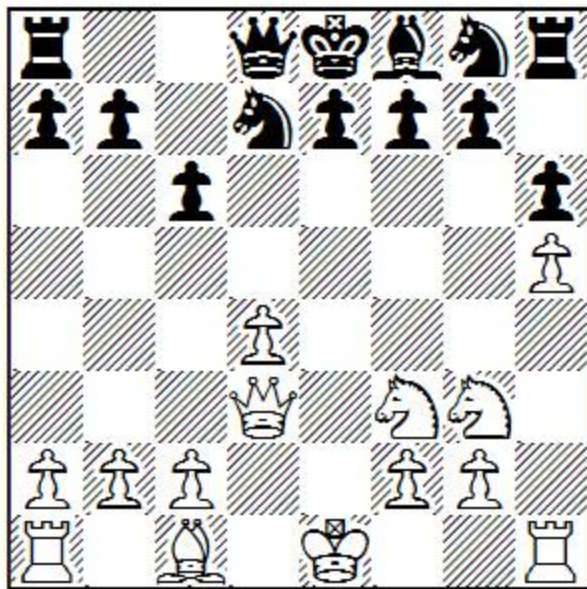
Game 62

B.Spassky-A.Karpov

Candidates Match, Leningrad 1974, 8th game

Caro-Kann Defence B19

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 Nc3 dxe4 4 Nxe4 Bf5 5 Ng3 Bg6 6 h4! (6 Nf3 – *Game No.60*) 6 ... h6 7 h5 Bh7 8 Nf3 Nd7 9 Bd3 Bxd3 10 Qxd3



10 ... Ngf6

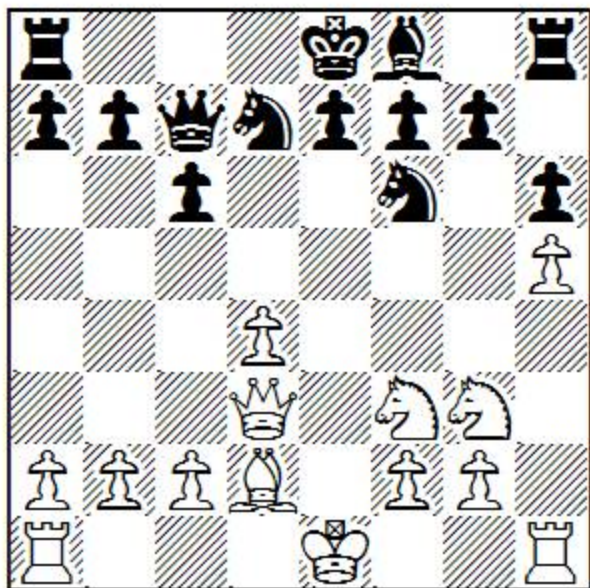
At that time it was customary to play 10 ... Qc7 (preventing Bf4) and then ... 0-0-0 (since ... 0-0 was considered too dangerous), although 10 ... Ngf6 or 10 ... e6 was not a rejection of the 'compulsory program': if 11 Bf4 Black replied 11 ... Qa5+ 12 Bd2 (after 12 c3 White has problems with castling: the queen at a5 keeps the a2- and h5-pawns under fire) 12 ... Qc7, returning to the usual line.

In the 4th game after 10 ... e6 Spassky employed a fresh idea – 11 b3 Ngf6 12 Bb2. Karpov's reaction was forceful – 12 ... Qa5+! 13 Bc3 (13 c3 Ba3) 13 ... Bb4 14 Bxb4 Qxb4+ 15 Qd2 Qxd2+ 16 Kxd2 c5 with equality.

11 Bd2

On this occasion, evidently not wanting a discussion in what were then the main lines of the Caro-Kann, Spassky had prepared another rare move. As for 11 Bf4, after 11 ... Qa5+ at the end of the 1970s the Latvian master Vitolins found the curious plan 12 c3 e6 13 a4!? and 14 b4 (removing the attack on the h5-pawn) followed by 0-0. This did not look too convincing and by the 1980s it was not longer topical. Following the example of Larsen, Black adopted more dynamic set-ups with castling on opposite sides – 11 ... e6!? 12 0-0-0 Be7 and nevertheless ... 0-0. In current tournament practice this is the dominant approach.

11 ... Qc7



12 c4

The usual way is 12 0-0-0 e6 13 Qe2 and Ne5 (following the source game: Spassky-Petrosian, 13th matchgame, Moscow 1966) or 13 Ne4 – this move is considered the strongest even today (*Volume 2, Game No.143*).

By beginning active play before castling, Spassky wants to gain something in this way. But what?

12 ... e6 13 Qe2

In Spassky-Portisch (9th matchgame, Mexico 1980) White reverted to the banal 13 0-0-0, when 13 ... 0-0-0 14 Bc3 c5 15 Kb1 cxd4 16 Nxd4 a6 led to a position which, albeit with the pawn on h4, had occurred between the same opponents back in Budapest 1961!

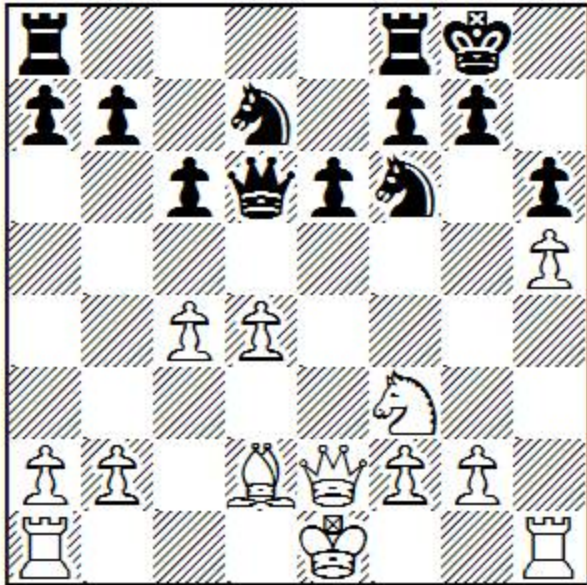
13 ... Bd6!

After 13 ... 0-0-0 Black may have been afraid of 14 c5 and a white pawn offensive on the queenside. This occurred soon afterwards in the game Karpov-Hort (Ljubljana 1975), but Hort cleverly created counterplay: 14 ... Rg8! 15 b4 g6 16 Rb1 gxh5 17 Kf1 Rg4 18 Rb3 Kb8 19 Nxb5 Nxb5 20 Rxb5 Nf6 21 Re5 Bg7 22 b5 Nd5 etc. But Spassky may have been intending 14 Ne5. Either way, 13 ... Bd6! is still considered best.

14 Nf5 Bf4

The game Karpov-Pomar (Nice Olympiad 1974) went 14 ... 0-0-0?! 15 Nxd6+ Qxd6 16 Ba5! Rde8 17 Ne5! and Black came under pressure. The fact that Anatoly began playing this variation with White indicates his high evaluation of Spassky's idea! Obviously he was also not satisfied with Black's position in the present game. But about that later.

Here it should be said that the most interesting of the lines along which the variation developed turned out to be 14 ... 0-0! 15 Nxd6 Qxd6.

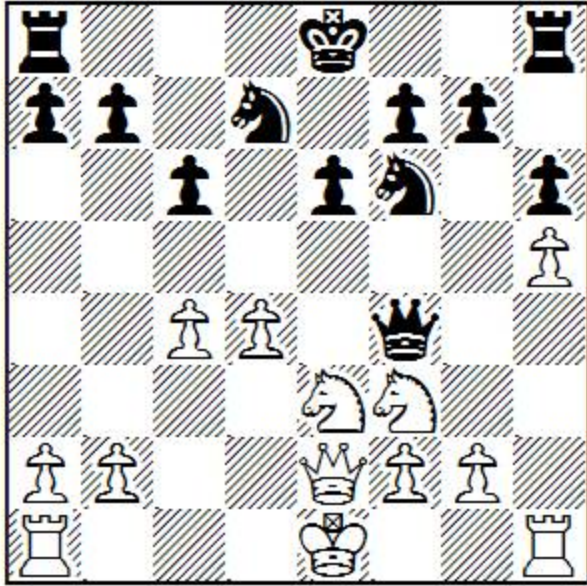


Analysis diagram

Thanks to his kingside (rather than queenside) castling, Black acquires a powerful resource in the fight for the initiative: ... b7-b5! This idea was first tried in 1975 in a game between two Leningrad masters: 16 0-0-0 b5! 17 cxb5 cxb5 18 Kb1 b4 19 Ne5 Nd5, with serious chances for Black on the queenside. I too twice played this with Black (on the advice of my trainer Alexander Shakarov). My opponents avoided queenside castling, but all the same they conceded the initiative: 16 Rh4 b5! 17 Kf1 bxc4 18 Qxc4 Qd5 19 Qe2 Qb5 20 b3 a5 (Lanka-Kasparov, Riga 1977), or 16 Bc3 b5! 17 cxb5 cxb5 18 Qxb5 Nd5 19 Ne5 Nxe5 (19 ... N7f6!?) 20 dxe5 Nxc3 21 bxc3 Qc7 (Kapengut-Kasparov, Daugavpils 1978).

Therefore 16 0-0-0 is nevertheless better, and if 16 ... b5 – 17 g4! In the game Mnatsakanian-Bagirov (Kirovakan 1978) after 17 ... bxc4 (though not now topical, 17 ... Nxg4!? 18 Rhg1 f5 is also worth analysing) 18 g5 hxg5 19 h6 g6 20 h7+ Nxh7 21 Nxg5 Nxg5 22 Bxg5 f6? 23 Qe4 White gained a very strong attack, but 22 ... c3! would probably have led to a draw: 23 Qe5!? cxb2+ 24 Kb1 Qxe5! 25 dxe5 f6 26 Rxd7 fxg5 27 Rhh7.

15 Bxf4 Qxf4 16 Ne3



16 ... Qc7?!

'It was dangerous to play 16 ... 0-0-0 17 c5 with the threat of Nc4-d6+. Therefore the correct solution was the undermining move 16 ... c5!, and if 17 Nd5 Nxd5 18 cxd5, then 18 ... 0-0 19 dxe6 Rfe8.' (Botvinnik). For example: 20 0-0 Rxe6 21 Qb5 Qc7 ... ½-½ (Tal-Portisch, Bugojno 1978).

The same operation as that planned by Karpov could have been begun immediately: 16 ... b5!? 17 cxb5 (or 17 d5 cxd5 18 Nxd5 Nxd5 19 exd5 0-0 20 dxe6 Rae8) 17 ... cxb5 18 Qxb5 0-0 with sufficient counterplay.

After the loss of just one tempo, Karpov will not quite be able to equalise for a long time. Even so, the defensive resources in the position prove sufficient for him to withstand a powerful attack.

17 0-0-0 b5

The white king (in contrast to Black's) has moved away from the centre, and the active 17 ... c5? is now dangerous: 18 Nd5! Nxd5 19 cxd5 cxd4+ 20 Kb1 e5 21 Nxd4 0-0 22 Nf5 and wins (Botvinnik).

18 cxb5!

After the tempting 18 c5 there is again a choice between 18 ... Rd8 19 Kb1 0-0 20 g4 Ne4 and 18 ... 0-0-0 19 Kb1 Kb7 20 Nc2 Nd5 with roughly equal chances.

Spassky is intending a grandiose offensive plan, rightly assuming that the black king has nowhere to hide, apart from the kingside.

18 ... cxb5+ 19 Kb1 0-0 20 g4!

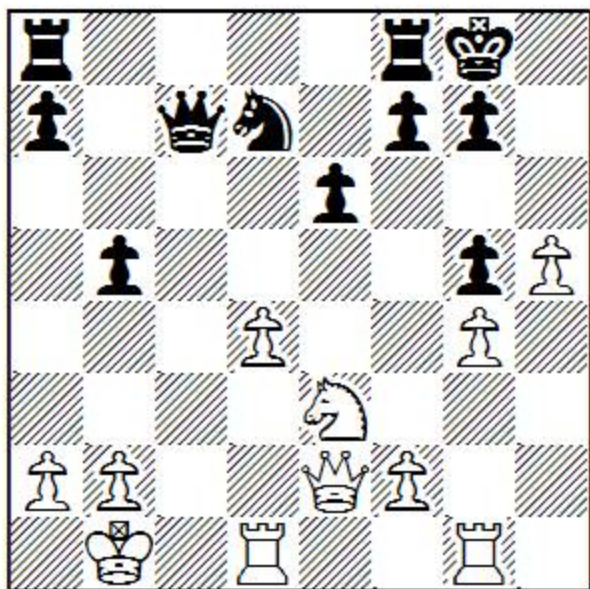
The opening of the g-file is the main link in White's attack. 20 Qxb5?! Rab8 would have signified him rejecting activity and going onto the defensive. After 21 Qe2 Black has a wide choice of promising continuations: 21 ... Rb4 22 Rc1 Qb7 23 Rc2 Rb8 or even the simple 21 ... Rxb2+ 22 Qxb2 Rb8. 21 Qd3 Qb7 22 Rd2 is better, but here too Black has no reason for complaint: 22 ... Rfc8 23 Rc2 Rxc2 24 Qxc2 Rc8 25 Qd3 (25 Qe2 Nxb5!) 25 ... Ne4.

20 ... Ne4 21 Rhg1

21 Rdg1?!, which is usual in such set-ups, would have allowed the opponent to slow the tempo of the attack by 21 ... Qf4! (22 g5?? is not possible on account of 22 ... Qxf3!). Kotov recommended the fanciful 21 Ng2, but this retreat is hardly able to strengthen the attack: 21 ... Ndf6 22 Ne5 Rac8 23 Rhe1 Rfd8 24 f3 Nd6.

The immediate opening of lines would not have produced the desired effect – 21 g5 hxg5 (the consequences of 21 ... Nxg5 22 Nxg5 hxg5 23 Rdg1 f6 are also unclear) 22 Rhg1 f6 23 d5 Ndc5 24 Nd4 Rae8 25 Nxb5 Qf4 with double-edged play.

21 ... Ng5! (preventing the opening of the g-file; if 21 ... Qf4?, then 22 g5! Nxg5 23 Nxg5 hxg5 24 Rg4 Qf6 25 Qxb5 is strong) **22 Nxg5 hxg5**



23 d5!

White is again not interested in the b5-pawn – only in an attack! ‘Could Spassky have believed that his opponent would be able to defend his broken position?’ writes Botvinnik, who considered 23 Qxb5 to be necessary.

Dvoretsky is of the same opinion: ‘White has insufficient resources for a direct attack on the king (partly as a consequence of his knight being not altogether well placed on e3). He can fight for an advantage, only by temporarily conceding the initiative – by accepting the pawn sacrifice, for which his opponent gains definite, but nevertheless insufficient compensation: 23 Qxb5 Rab8 24 Qd3! (but not Botvinnik’s recommendation 24 Qe2? on account of 24 ... Rxb2+! 25 Qxb2 Rb8) with the idea of Rd2 and Rc1.’

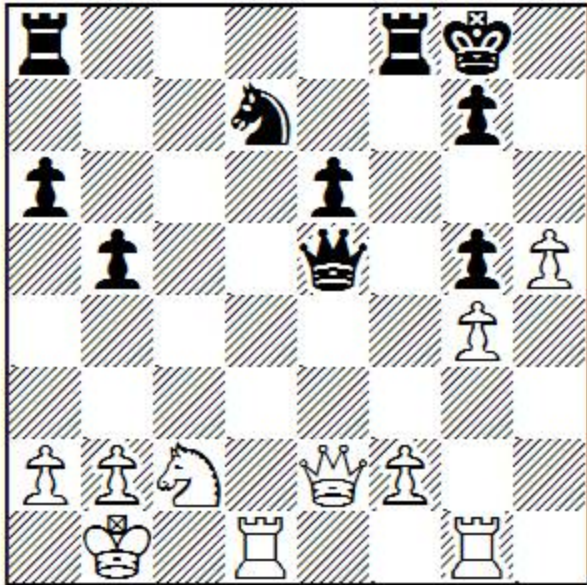
Even so, after 24 ... Nb6! 25 Rd2 (25 Rc1 Qf4) 25 ... Rfc8!? Black could have hoped for good counterplay.

23 ... a6!

Staggering composure! After 23 ... Qe5 24 dxe6 Qxe6 White could have grabbed the pawn without risk: 25 Qxb5 Ne5 26 Qd5. To spend time on the defence of a second-rate pawn when you are under fire, even if you have an excellent positional sense you also have to have great courage.

24 h6?!

Consistent, but ineffective! The correct strategy was play in the centre: 24 dxe6 fxe6 25 Nc2! Qe5!



Analysis diagram

After the natural 26 Qd2 the bold 26 ... Nc5! (26 ... Nf6?! 27 f3!) 27 Rge1 Qf4 would have enabled Black both to defend the e6-pawn, and activate his pieces.

It turns out that White should have primarily been guided by the opponent's broken pawn structure and threatened to go into a favourable endgame, which would have been achieved by 26 Rge1! Black has two alternatives, but in both cases he would have had to solve some difficult problems:

1) 26 ... Rad8 27 Nb4 Qxe2 28 Rxe2 Nf6 29 Rxd8 Rxd8 30 Na6 (30 f3 Rd6!) 30 ... Nxg4 31 Nc7;

2) 26 ... Qxe2 27 Rxe2 Nc5 28 Ne1! Rad8 29 Rxd8 Rxd8, and an unpleasant defence awaits Black both in the knight endgame – 30 Re5 Rd5 31 Rxd5 exd5 32 Kc2 Kf7 33 b4 Ne6 34 Nd3 Kf6 35 Kd2, and in the rook endgame – 30 Nf3 Rd5 31 Ne5 Kf8 32 b4 Nd3 33 Nxd3 Rxd3 34 Rxe6 Rd4 35 a3 Rxd4 36 Rxa6 Rg1+ 37 Kc2 Rf1 38 Rg6 Rxf2+ 39 Kd3.

Spassky's choice, based on intuition and the motto 'Forward, Kazimirysh!', is in fact an example of an unequal pawn exchange, which relieves Black of one of his weak pawns and deprives White of his h5-pawn, one which would be very important for the endgame. Alas, this became clear only after no brainstorms were able to demonstrate

the strength of his attack. And Spassky had to make his decision with the clock ticking ...

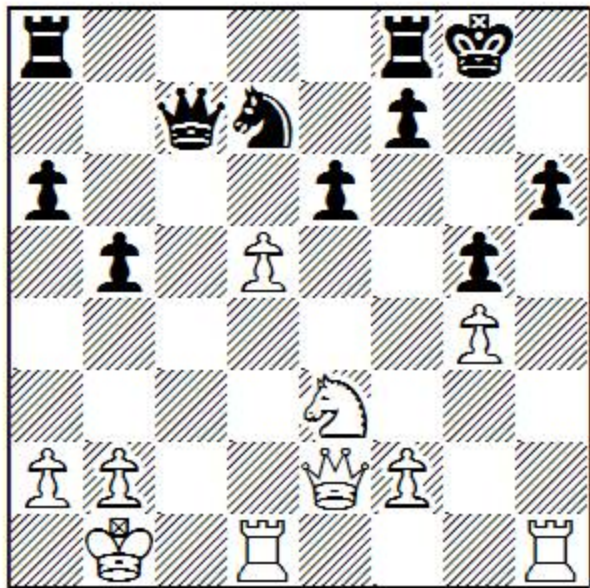
24 ... gxh6!

Another defensive scheme – 24 ... g6 25 dxe6 fxe6 was condemned by Tal on the basis of the variation 26 Nf5!? Rae8? 27 h7+! Kxh7 28 Rxd7+! Qxd7 29 Rh1+ Kg8 30 Qe5, but Black would have parried the attack by activating his queen: 26 ... Qe5! 27 Qd2 exf5 28 Rge1 Qf6 29 Qxd7 Rad8 30 Qb7 Rxd1+ 31 Rxd1 Rf7, or 27 Qc2 exf5 28 Rxd7 Rac8 29 Qd2 fxg4. Even so, White would have retained an advantage after the less spectacular 26 Rc1! Qb7 (or 26 ... Qf4 27 Rgd1) 27 Nf1 Kh7 28 Ng3.

Karpov is hoping that, during the time that White spends on winning the h6-pawn, he will be able to consolidate his position.

25 Rh1

It appears that Black is in trouble.



25 ... Nf6!

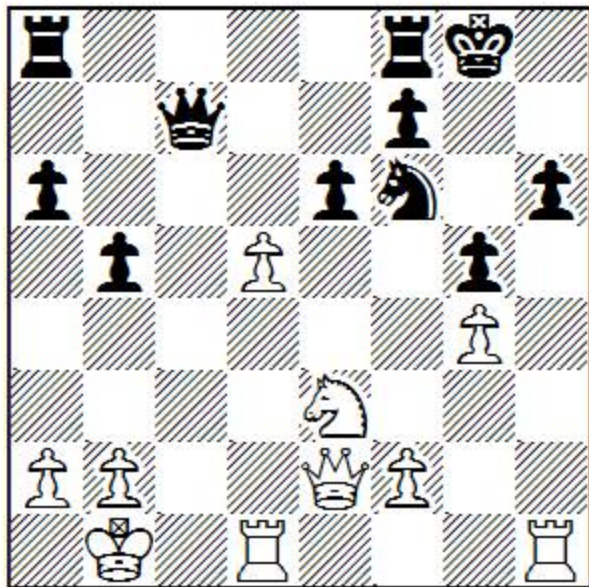
This strong move came as a surprise to Spassky, and he thought for nearly half an hour over his reply, leaving himself just 18 minutes for 14 moves.

25 ... Kg7? looks the natural reaction, after which there would probably have followed the thunderous 26 f4!! If 26 ... gxf4 Tal gives the following winning variation: 27 Qh2 Rh8 28 Ng2 e5 29 Nh4 Nf6 30

Nf5+ Kg6 31 Rc1 Qd8 32 Rc6, but if Black does not weaken his position for the sake of keeping his f4-pawn, then after 28 ... Rac8! there is no clear way to win.

And yet White's attack is irresistible, but for this he has to play very energetically and accurately! Thus the immediate and 'obvious' 27 g5, in the hope of 27 ... h5? 28 dxe6 fxe6 29 Ng4!! with crushing threats (29 ... Qc6 30 Rxd7+! Qxd7 31 Qe5+ Kf7 32 g6+ Ke7 33 Qg7+ Ke8 34 Nf6+ Rxf6 35 Qxf6 Qd5 36 Qf7+ Kd8 37 Rg1) is parried by the only reply 27 ... Qe5!, when the attack gradually peters out: 28 Qh5 (28 Qh2 h5) 28 ... Qe4+ 29 Nc2 Qg6 30 gxh6+ Kh7 31 Qe2 Nf6.

Black is deprived of this saving possibility by the preparatory exchange 27 dxe6! fxe6 (27 ... fxe3 is refuted by the simple 28 Qxe3), and now 28 g5! is very strong, for example: 28 ... fxe3 29 Qh5 e2 30 Qxe2, and Black, despite his extra piece, has no defence (30 ... Ne5 31 Rxh6 Rad8 32 Rdh1 Rh8 33 Qh2 Qb8 34 Rh7+ Rxh7 35 Qxh7+ Kf8 36 Rf1+ Ke8 37 g6), or 28 ... Ne5 29 Qh5! Nf7 30 Ng4 Rad8 31 gxh6+ Kh8 32 Qg6 Ne5 33 Qg7+ Qxg7 34 hxg7+ Kxg7 35 Nxe5 with a decisive advantage.



26 Rxh6

26 d6!? was tempting, but too risky in time-trouble. Besides, the memories of White's sufferings in the 6th game on account of such a pawn were evidently still too fresh. The best line is 26 ... Qc6 27 f3 Kg7

28 Qh2 Rh8 with dynamic equilibrium: 29 Rd3! (29 Qe5? Qxf3!) 29 ... Rac8 30 Rc3 Qa8 31 Rc7 b4 32 Qe2 a5 33 Rhc1 Rxc7 34 dxc7 Rc8 35 Qd3 Qb7 36 Qd8 Ne8 37 Qd4+ Kg8 38 Qd8 Kf8, and here the elegant trick 39 Nd5! leads after 39 ... Kg7 40 Ne7 Rxc7 41 Rxc7 Nxc7 42 Qd4+ Kf8 43 Nc8! to the creation of a no less elegant drawing construction.

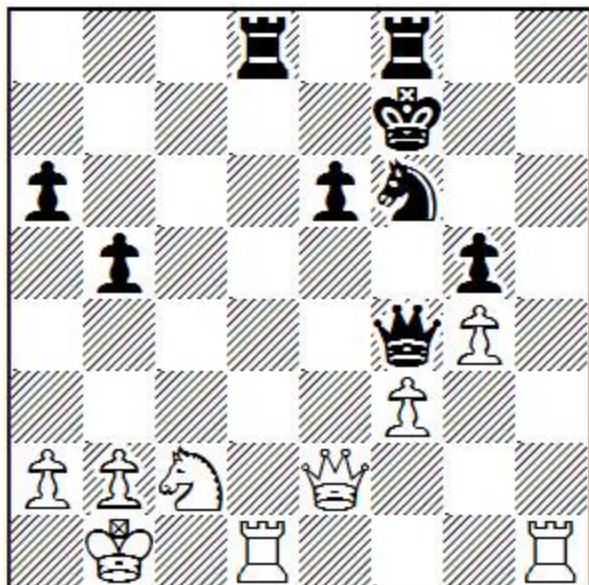
26 ... Kg7 27 Rhh1 Rad8 28 dxe6 fxe6 (or 28 ... Rxd1 29 Nxd1 Qc6! 30 Re1 Qxe6 31 Ne3 Re8 with equality) 29 Nc2

Another attempt to gain an advantage was 29 Rc1 Qf4 30 f3, and after 30 ... Rd7 31 Rc6 Black is in serious difficulties: 31 ... Rfd8 32 Rxe6 Rd2 33 Nf5+ Kg8 34 Re7. However, the more active 30 ... Rh8! would have maintained equality: 31 Rxh8 Rxh8 32 Nc2 Kf7 33 Re1 Re8 34 a3, or 31 Rhe1 Rd7 32 Rc6 Rh2.

29 ... Qf4 (29 ... Qc4! was simpler, with equality) 30 f3

The double-edged 30 Qxe6!? is not so harmless. In the event of 30 ... Rxd1+ 31 Rxd1 Qxg4 32 Qd6! White has the initiative, so Black would have to play more boldly: 30 ... Qe4! 31 Qb3 Rxd1+ (after 31 ... Rh8 32 f3 Rxh1 33 Rxh1 Qd3 34 Qxd3 Rxd3 35 Rf1 Nd5 36 Kc1 Kf6 Black's activity in the endgame a pawn down might prove insufficient: 37 Ne1 Rd4 38 Rf2 Ke5 39 Rd2 etc.) 32 Rxd1 Nxg4! 33 Rd7+ (33 Re1 Qc4) 33 ... Kg6 34 Rd6+ Rf6 35 Qg8+ Kh5!, and White has no more attacking resources.

30 ... Kf7



31 a3

The last chance was the cunning 31 Ne1!? Rxd1+ 32 Qxd1. Tal thought that after 32 ... e5 the pawn would have been exchanged, and with it Black's main problem would have disappeared. But if this variation is continued – 33 Nd3 Qd4 34 Qc2! Re8 (34 ... e4 35 fxe4 Qxe4 36 Re1!) 35 Nc5 e4 36 fxe4 Nxe4 37 Qb3 Kg6 38 Qh3, White's initiative proves dangerous. An excellent defensive construction was pointed out by Spassky: 32 ... Ke7! 33 Nd3 Qd4 34 Qd2 (34 Qc2 Nd5!) 34 ... Rd8 35 Rd1 Rd5!, and Black, after consolidating in the centre, stands no worse.

31 ... e5 32 Nb4 e4! 33 fxe4 Rxd1+ 34 Rxd1 Re8! (now the conflict is fully exhausted) **35 Nxa6 Qxe4+ 36 Qxe4 Rxe4 37 Nc7 b4 38 axb4 Rxb4 39 Rf1 Rf4 ½-½**

A genuine battle of titans!

This draw completely broke the ex-champion. Tal: 'The match was effectively concluded in the 8th game, when Spassky was unable to win it. Personally I didn't doubt for a second that after White began his attack with 24 h6 the game would soon come to a spectacular end. But after 25 ... Nf6 (Karpov made this move fairly quickly) no win could be found! Such a blow is even greater than a defeat. When such positions cannot be won, you begin to lose confidence. All sorts of devilish thoughts creep into your mind, such as: is it altogether possible to win against him?'

In the 9th game a 'reverse surprise' waited the already pretty exhausted Spassky – an unexpected return to 1 e4! And here his indifferent pre-match preparation again made itself felt: in the Sicilian Defence the ex-world champion did not have to his name even one secure and well-studied variation, corresponding to his active style of play.

Karpov: 'When I played 1 e4, with a completely vacant look Spassky suddenly began adjusting with both hands, for the second time, his already accurately placed pieces. He was nervous ... It is probable that this blow too came as a surprise. The point is that, in contrast to Fischer, who changed openings after comparative failures, I, on the contrary, avoided set-ups which had brought success. Thus in the 11th game I played 1 d4. It was probably rather difficult for Spassky to prepare for games with me.'

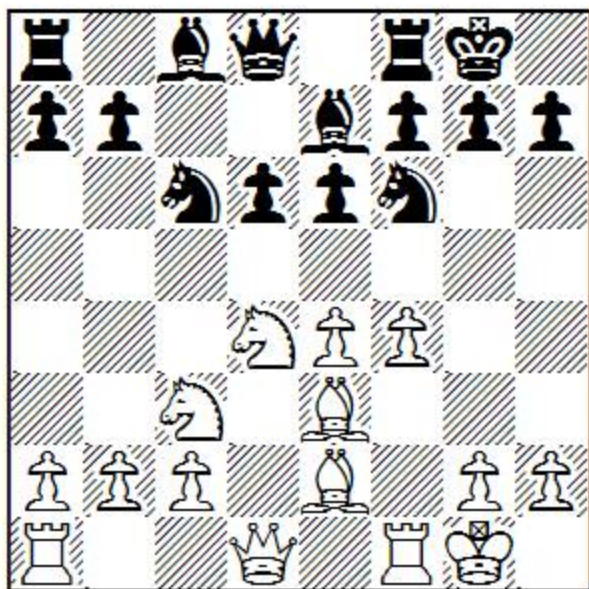
Game 63

A.Karpov-B.Spassky

Candidates Match, Leningrad 1974, 9th game

Sicilian Defence B83

1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 e6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Nf6 5 Nc3 d6 6 Be2 Be7 7 0-0 0-0 8 f4 Nc6 9 Be3



9 ... Bd7

Apparently Spassky was somewhat flustered and just in case he decided to avoid 9 ... e5 10 Nb3 a5 11 a4 Nb4 (1st game). He did not want to test the quality of the Karpov team's work. However, in the end it all reduced to the set-ups with ... e6-e5, but in a less favourable version for Black ...

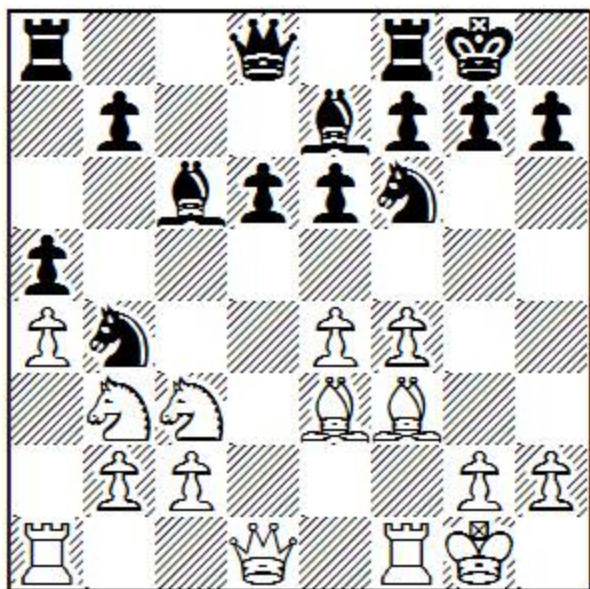
10 Nb3 a5?!

A strategically dubious move. Spassky is still aiming for the set-up which he had analysed together with Bondarevsky. However, this was hardly a detailed analysis by the followers of the 'clear head' theory, as shown by the subsequent course of the game. The usual 10 ... a6 or 10 ... Qc7 would have directed the game along the lines of the classical Scheveningen.

11 a4 Nb4 12 Bf3 Bc6

If 12 ... e5 the strongest has been considered to be 13 Kh1, since the time of Geller's games: 13 ... Rc8 14 Rf2 Rc4 15 fxe5 dxe5 16 Rd2 Qc7 17 Qg1! with advantage (Geller-Reshevsky, Palma de Mallorca Interzonal 1970), or 13 ... Bc6 14 fxe5 dxe5 15 Qe2 Qc7 16 Qf2 Nd7 17 Rad1 Kh8 (Geller-Polugayevsky, Portoroz 1973) 18 Rd2 Rad8 19 Qg3.

Spassky is not in a hurry to free himself, but the opponent observes his preparations, realising that ... e6-e5 is Black's only chance.



13 Nd4!

In contrast to the 1st game, the knight gains the opportunity to return to the centre, after which Black has no compensation for the opponent's eternal outpost for his pieces at b5. Besides, after ... e6-e5 the knight may leap to f5, and Spassky goes in for a weakening of his pawn structure.

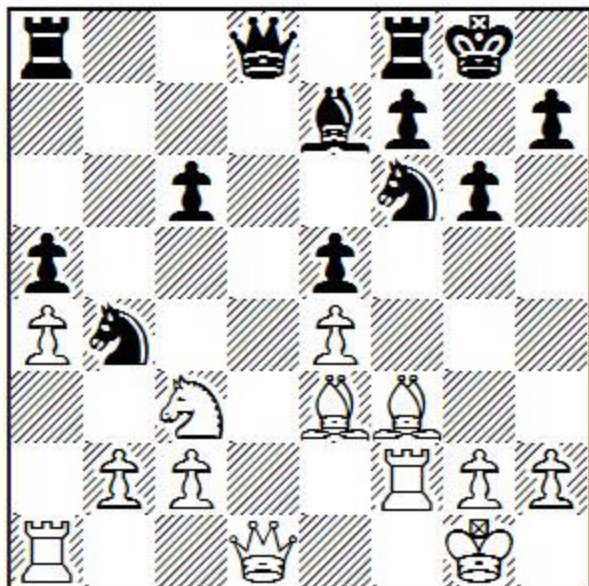
13 ... g6

Preparing ... e6-e5. The passive set-up 13 ... Qb8 14 Qe2 Re8 15 Rad1 Kh8 (Klovans-Vasyukov, Riga 1968) does not satisfy Spassky.

14 Rf2! e5 (the threat of Rd2 did not allow time for a more thorough preparation of this advance) **15 Nxc6 bxc6**

After 15 ... Nxc6?! 16 f5! Black would have been in a difficult position without any strategic trumps.

16 fxe5 dxe5

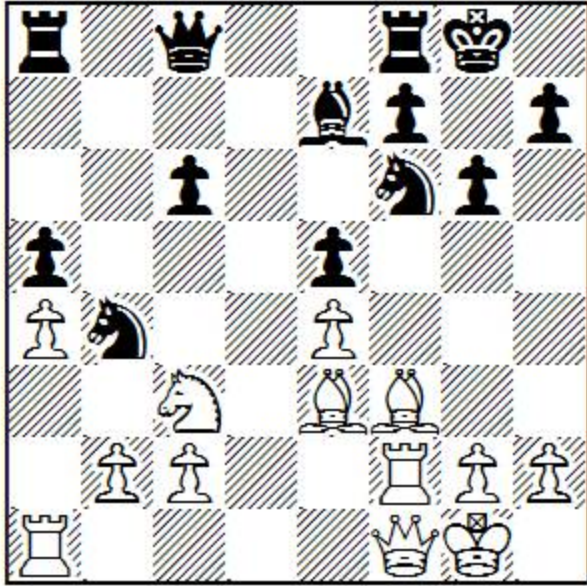


17 Qf1!

The resulting middlegame looks very attractive for White, but there is not yet anything to herald an instant rout.

17 ... Qc8?!

This merely provokes a useful pawn move for White and induces the activation of his bishop at f3. Botvinnik suggested 17 ... Nd7! 18 Qc4 Nb6 19 Qb3 Bg5 20 Bc5 (20 Nd1 Rb8) 20 ... Be7, setting up a defence, or 18 Rd1!? Qc7, and Black's position is more solid than in the game.



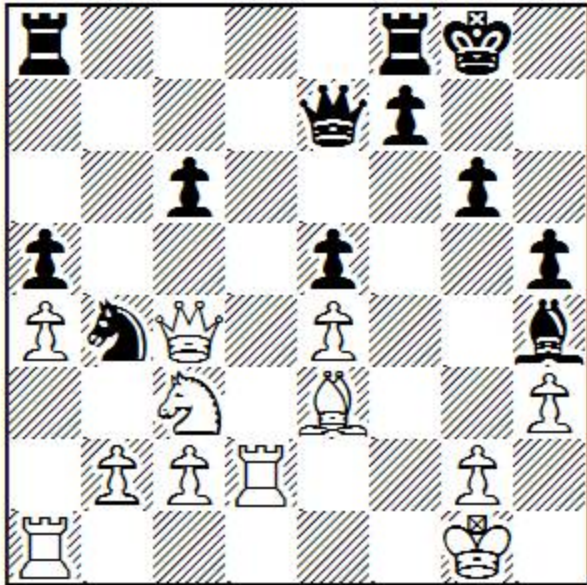
18 h3! Nd7

Spassky had probably been planning 18 ... Qe6, but then noticed in time that after 19 Rc1! White carries out an extremely unpleasant regrouping: 19 ... Ra(f)d8 20 Be2 Rd4 21 b3! and 22 Bc4 (Karpov, Botvinnik).

19 Bg4 h5?

A serious weakening of the king's shelter. In the opinion of Karpov and Botvinnik, the best chances of a defence were offered by 19 ... Qc7, in order after 20 Rd1 Rad8 21 Kh1 Kg7 22 Nb1 f5! 23 exf5 Nd5 to provoke complications. But here too after 20 Bxd7! Qxd7 21 Qc4 White's advantage is obvious.

20 Bxd7 Qxd7 21 Qc4 Bh4 22 Rd2 Qe7



23 Rf1

Karpov and Botvinnik considered this to be the strongest, and rejected the other development of the attack 23 Bc5 Qg5 24 Rd7 because of the exchange sacrifice 24 ... Nxc2 25 Bxf8 Rxf8. Indeed, after 26 Rb1 Bg3! (26 ... Qxg2+ 27 Kxg2 Ne3+ 28 Kf3 Nxc4 29 b3 leads to an inferior endgame) Black has excellent compensation: 27 Qxc6 runs into 27 ... Ne1! with the threat of ... Bh2+.

However, 24 Rad1! (instead of 24 Rd7) 24 ... Rfd8 25 Rxd8+ Rxd8 26 Rf1! was much stronger, and after 26 ... Rd7 27 Bxb4 axb4 28 Qxc6! Qe3+ 29 Kh2 it would have left Black in a hopeless position: 29 ... Bg3+ 30 Kh1 Ra7 31 Nd5 Qe2 32 Qb5!, or 29 ... Rd8 30 Nd5 Qe2 31 Rf3.

Karpov, most probably intuitively, chose a plan of further strengthening the position, more in accordance with his style of play.

23 ... Rfd8 24 Nb1!

This fine 'backwards move' provoked a real stir in the press centre and in the auditorium. The knight is transferred to a better square at the most convenient moment.

24 ... Qb7

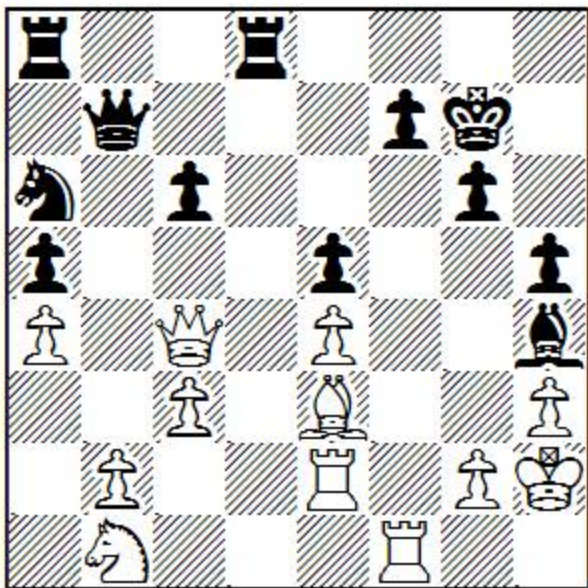
The exchange of queens would have irreparably weakened Black's pawns and led to a technically lost endgame: 24 ... Qe6 25 Qxe6 fxe6 26 Na3.

25 Kh2! Kg7 26 c3 (White also has an enormous advantage after 26 Rxd8!? Rxd8 27 Nd2) 26 ... Na6

Black has to withdraw to the edge of the board. The dashing cavalry raid 26 ... Rxd2 27 Nxd2 Nc2 28 Bc5 Ne1 fails to save him: 29 Rxe1 Bxe1 30 Nf3 Qxb2 31 Nxe1 Qd2 32 Nf3 Qf4+ 33 Kh1 Rd8 34 Bg1 or, more methodically, 29 Nb3 Nd3 30 Qxd3 Qxb3 31 Qd6 Qe6 32 Qxe6 fxe6 33 Rd1 Rd8 34 Rxd8 Bxd8 35 b4 with a won endgame.

27 Re2!

'Following the old Steinitz principle – don't exchange pieces when you have the freer position. Now 28 g3 and Ref2 is threatened.' (Botvinnik). The temporary conceding of the d-file is not dangerous – it is more important for White to retain the rook for his attack on the f-file and at the same time vacate the d2-square for his knight.



27 ... Rf8?

Black should not have shown such indifference to the d-file. 27 ... Rd6 28 Nd2 Re8 was more tenacious, erecting defensive lines in the event of 29 Qa2 Bd8 30 Nc4 Rd7 31 Ref2 f6. Now the direct assault 32 Bg5 Nc5 33 Bxf6+ Bxf6 34 Rxf6 wins material, but gives Black counterplay – 34 ... Nxe4 35 Nxa5 Qc7 36 Re6 Rde7 37 Rxe7+ Rxe7 38 b4 c5, but on the other hand 32 b3! leaves him under unbearable positional pressure. It is possible that 29 Nf3 Bd8 30 b4 axb4 31 cxb4

f6 32 Rd2! Rxd2 33 Bxd2 Be7 34 Ng5! Bxb4 35 Bxb4 f6 36 Bd6 is even stronger, emphasising the pitiful fate of the black knight.

27 ... Rd7 28 Nd2 Nc7 is also insufficient – a combined offensive brings White a decisive advantage: 29 Nf3 Bf6 30 Bg5 Bxg5 31 Nxd5 f6 32 Re2 Rf8 33 Qc5! h4 (33 ... Qa8 34 h4!, and Black is in zugzwang: 34 ... Qa6 35 Rxf6! Rxf6 36 Rxf6 Kxf6 37 Qf8+) 34 Nh7! (after 34 Qxa5 Ra8 35 Qc5 f6 36 Qxe5+ Kg8 37 Qxg5 Rg7 38 Qxh4 c5! Black still has some hopes) 34 ... Ne6 35 Qc4 Kxh7 36 Qxe6 Re7 37 Qd6 Qc7 38 Qxc7 Rxc7 39 Rxf6 with a won ending.

28 Nd2 Bd8

Altogether submissive. Certain efforts would have been demanded of White after both 28 ... Be7 29 Nb3! Qc7 30 Re2 f6 31 Rd2, and if 31 ... Rfd8 32 Rxd8 Bxd8, then 33 Nxa5! Qxa5 34 Qxc6 Rb8 35 Rd1! Be7 36 Rd7 Re8 37 Ra7, and 28 ... Rae8 29 Nb3 Bd8 30 Re2 f6 31 Rd2 f5 32 Rfd1 Nb8 33 Nc5 Qf7 34 Qxf7 Kxf7 35 Nb7 Bc7 36 Bc5, winning.

29 Nf3 f6 30 Rd2! Be7 31 Qe6! (the decisive invasion) 31 ... Rad8 (if 31 ... Nb8 the simplest is 32 Rfd1 followed by the unavoidable Rd7!) 32 Rxd8 Bxd8 33 Rd1 Nb8 34 Bc5 Rh8 35 Rxd8! 1-0

An elegant conclusion: 35 ... Rxd8 36 Be7!

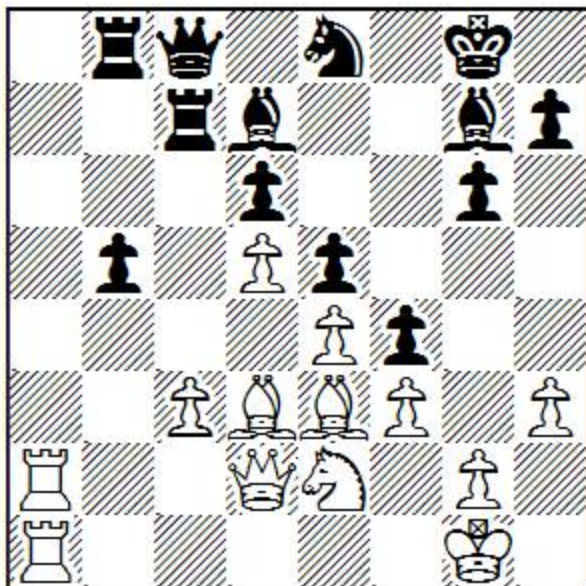
Tal: 'The ending of the 9th game creates a completely indelible impression. In general it is rather hard to surprise me, but Tolya did this, by spending no more than about five minutes on the dozen splendid concluding moves.' The score became 3-1 and Karpov needed just one more win.

In the 10th game Spassky was ready to again try and storm the bastions of the Caro-Kann, but for the first time in the match Karpov replied 1 ... e5, unafraid of playing the Breyer Variation in the Ruy Lopez – his opponent's favourite defence. This was a challenge! White soon closed the position with d4-d5 and gained an enduring initiative. Botvinnik: 'A rare instance, when Karpov was forced to fight against his own domination method.'

Game 64

B.Spassky-A.Karpov

Candidates Match, Leningrad 1974, 10th game



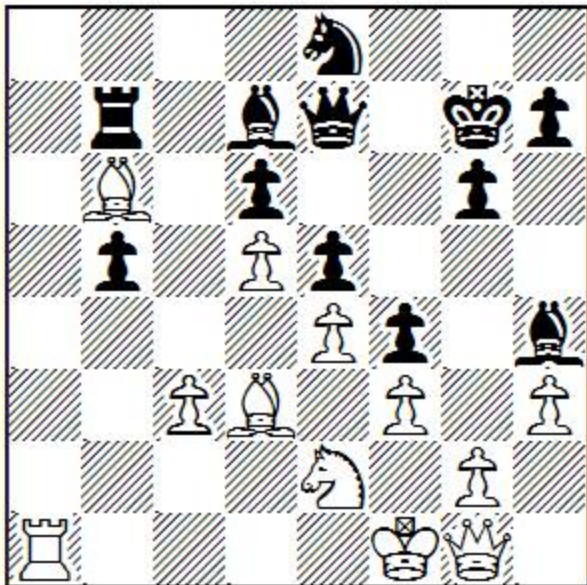
32 Ba7! (this procedure was later employed by Karpov himself – cf. *Game No.66*) **32 ... Rbb7?!** (32 ... Ra8 looks sounder, and if 33 Bf2(b6), then 33 ... Rxa2 34 Qxa2 Rb7 and ... Bf6!) **33 Qe1 Qd8 34 Qf2 Rc8?!**

The immediate **34 ... Bf6** was more accurate.

35 Ra6 Bf6 36 Bb6 Qe7 37 Ra7 Rcb8

'Avoiding a well-camouflaged trap: after 37 ... Bh4? 38 Rxb7! Bxf2+ 39 Kxf2 Qh4+ 40 Kg1 Black's position is hardly tenable.' (Botvinnik). However, here 40 ... Bxh3 or 40 ... Nf6 (this move also follows after 40 Kf1) is unclear. Therefore 39 Bxf2! Rc7 40 Rb8 Rc8 (40 ... Qg5 41 Kh2) 41 Rxc8 Bxc8 42 Bxb5 is much stronger, when Black does indeed have a difficult position: 42 ... Nf6 43 Ra7, or 42 ... Nc7 43 c4! etc.

38 Rxb7 Rxb7 39 Kf1 (39 Kh1!? Bh4 40 Qg1 was also not bad) **39 ... Bh4 40 Qg1 Kg7**



41 Ra7?

After 41 Ra8! Karpov would still have faced a difficult struggle for a draw: 41 ... Nc7?! 42 Bxc7 Rxc7 43 Qb6 Rc5 44 Ra7, or 41 ... Qg5 42 Ba5 Qh5 43 Nc1 Bxh3 44 Ke2! Qg5! (44 ... Bd7 45 Ra7) 45 Rxe8 Bxg2 46 Kd2! Bxf3 47 Qxg5 Bxg5 48 Bb4 etc.

Spassky told me it was at this moment, before the adjournment of the game, that he suddenly felt that he no longer had the strength to fight for a win, that he was mentally exhausted. And, having lost belief in success, he gave up the struggle ...

41 ... Rxa7 42 Bxa7 Qd8 43 Qb6 Qc7! 44 Qxc7 Nxc7 with a draw on the 61st move.

Tal: 'I will simply not undertake to annotate the final, 11th game. It is an exact copy of the 21st game of Spassky's match with Fischer in Reykjavik. There Boris conducted all the concluding games with a kind of anguished pressure. He tried very, very hard ... But it didn't happen! No, he didn't give up the match as a bad job – this happened of its own accord. It occurred sub-consciously: he is one of the those players who consciously does not resign ...

'Spassky's condition is familiar to me: it was the same with me in the 21st game of my return match with Botvinnik. When I sat down at the board, I thought that, God willing, I would win ... It didn't happen!

And with Spassky it didn't happen, either against Fischer, or against Karpov.'

Game 65

A.Karpov-B.Spassky

Candidates Match, Leningrad 1974, 11th game

Queen's Gambit D58

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e6 3 Nf3 d5

A psychological duel which is typical of matchplay: White has not acceded to his the opponent's desire to play the Nimzo-Indian Defence, and in reply Black did not want to switch to Queen's Indian lines.

4 Nc3 Be7 5 Bg5 h6 6 Bh4 0-0 7 e3 (7 Rc1 – *Game Nos.74 and 84*) **7 ... b6** (it was not hard to expect this popular variation from Spassky, which bears the name of his second, Bondarevsky) **8 Be2**

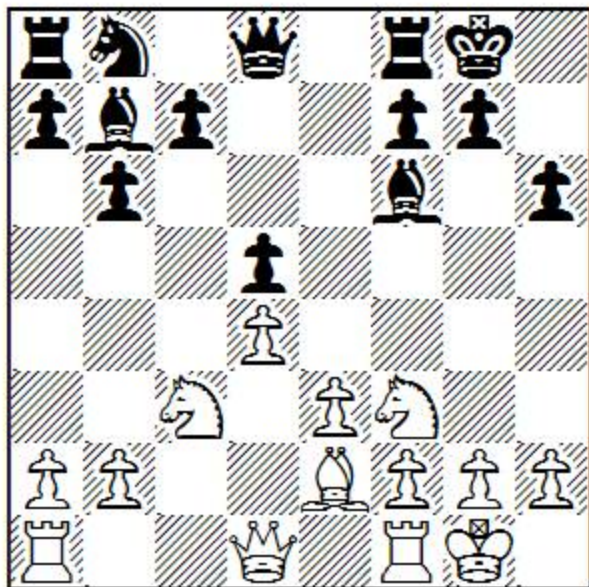
Korchnoi's move, though he also employed 8 Rc1 (*Game No.28*). Here Fischer played 8 cxd5 (*Volume 4, Game No.103*).

8 ... Bb7 9 Bxf6!?

An important part of a plan aimed at restricting the mobility of the enemy pieces, in particular the bishops, and leaving Black few chances of counterplay.

9 ... Bxf6 10 cxd5! exd5 11 0-0

I would have preferred 11 b4, which after 11 ... c5 12 bxc5 bxc5 13 Rb1 Bc6 14 0-0 Nd7 or 11 ... c6 12 0-0 Nd7 usually transposes into the variation 11 0-0 Nd7 12 b4.



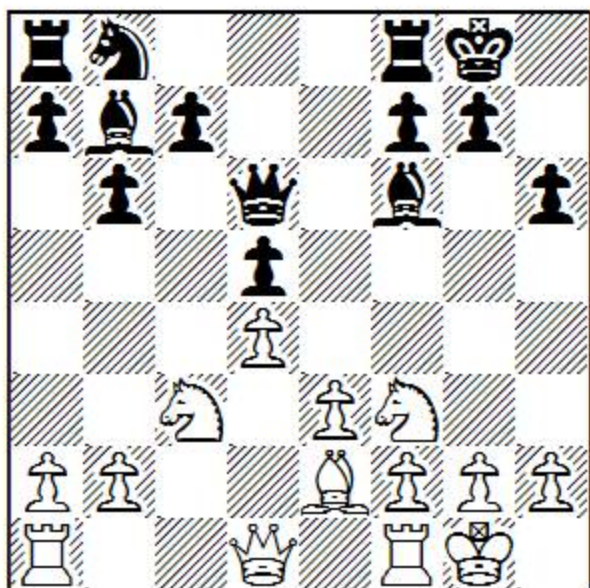
11 ... Qd6?!

The first questionable moment. Numerous games played since then have shown several other plans, involving ... c7-c5, to be more promising:

1) 11 ... Qe7 12 Qb3! Rd8 13 Rad1. This demands a certain accuracy in defence. 13 ... c6?! is passive: 14 Rfe1 Bc8 (14 ... Nd7 15 Bf1 Nf8 16 e4 dxe4 17 Nxe4 Ne6 18 Bc4 Re8 19 Ne5 Rad8 20 f4 also favours White, Beliavsky-Georgadze, 47th USSR Championship, Minsk 1979) 15 Qc2! c5?! 16 e4! dxe4 17 Nxe4! and Black is in a difficult position (Karpov-Beliavsky, Reggio Emilia 1991). 13 ... c5! is more energetic (this move has proved better than its initial reputation): 14 dxc5 Bxc3 15 Qxc3 (after 15 c6 Nxc6 16 Qxc3 Rac8 Black has good development in return for his isolated pawn) 15 ... bxc5 (Black also need not be too concerned about hanging pawns) 16 Rc1 Nd7 17 Rc2 Rdc8 (not 17 ... Rab8?! 18 b3 Qe6 19 Rd1 Qb6 20 Ne1 Korchnoi-Geller, 5th matchgame, Moscow 1971) 18 Qa3 a5 19 Rfc1 Qf6 20 Bb5 Bc6 21 Bxc6 Rxc6 22 Qd3 Rd6 with equality (Veingold-Tal, Tallinn 1983). Later Timman twice – against Yusupov (Rotterdam 1989) and Ivanchuk (Hilversum 1991) – tried to work on Black's hanging pawns with 16 Rd2 Nd7 17 Rc1 a5 18 Qa3, but he was unable to demonstrate an advantage for White;

2) 11 ... Nd7. This is also a good continuation for Black. In Volume 3 (p.326) we have already talked about 12 Qb3 c6 (Timman-Spassky, Bugojno 1982; Hilversum 1983). Another critical position – 12 b4 c5 13 bxc5 bxc5 14 Rb1 Bc6 – occurred seven times(!) in my matches with Karpov (1984-87) alone, and in Volume 7 we will return to it;

3) 11 ... c5 (with the two bishops, this immediate activity is also possible) 12 dxc5, and here there are two ways: 12 ... Bxc3 13 bxc3 bxc5 14 Rb1 Qc7 (14 ... Qe7?! is weaker, Kasparov-Torre, Moscow 1981; after 15 Qa4! Nc6 16 Qa3 Black would have been in difficulties) 15 Ne5, and White maintains pressure (Kramnik-Khalifman, Linares 2000), or 12 ... bxc5!? (this attempt to rehabilitate 11 ... c5 may prove successful) 13 Qb3 Bc6 14 Rad1 Nd7!? 15 Nxd5 Rb8 etc.



12 Rb1! a6

Black is forced to waste time on this now non-essential move, in order to defend the b5-square. He stands worse after 12 ... c6 13 e4! and the belated 12 ... c5? is completely bad: 13 dxc5 bxc5 14 Ne4!

13 a3 Nd7

Botvinnik remarked that 'a position has been reached, similar to a well-known variation of the Grünfeld Defence': 2 ... g6 3 Nc3 d5 4 Nf3 Bg7 5 Bg5 Ne4 6 cxd5 Nxd5 7 Nxd5 e6 8 Nf3 exd5 9 e3 0-0 10 Be2 c6 11 0-0 Qe7 12 a3 Be6 13 Rc1 Nd7 and then 14 Ne1 Nb6 15 Nd3 Rad8 16 Nc5 Bc8 17 b4 Nc4 18 Nb1 b6 (18 ... Nd6!?) 19 Nb3 Ba6 20

Re1 Rfe8 21 N1d2! b5 22 Ra1 Bc8 23 Bf1 Qd6 24 Nc5 (Lasker-Botvinnik, Nottingham 1936).

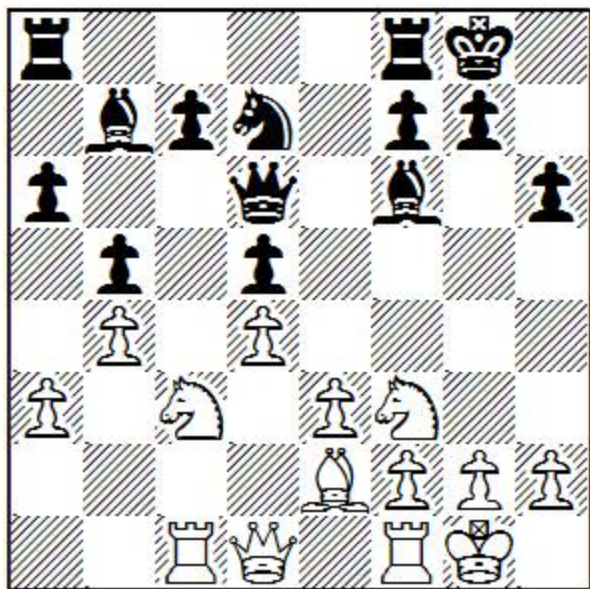
In my view, the similarity is rather arbitrary for the moment: White's pieces and pawns are arranged exactly like Lasker's, but Black has already weakened his queenside pawn structure. Although subsequently, in typical middlegame positions, this similarity may manifest itself.

14 b4

White begins playing for a queenside bind, and Black is obliged to forget about activity with ... c7-c5. But he can try to exploit the weakening of the c4-square.

14 ... b5

Botvinnik approves of this committing continuation (he himself played this against Lasker). Tal, by contrast, considers this 'nervy decision' to be the initial cause of Black's difficulties and he suggests 14 ... Be7 15 Bd3 Qe6! 16 Qc2 Bd6 and then 17 Bf5 Qe7 18 e4 dxe4 19 Bxe4 Bxe4 20 Nxe4 Bf4 21 Rcd1 Nf6 with approximate equality.



15 Ne1?!

'It is surprising that Karpov also manoeuvres like Lasker. However, in Karpov's opinion, 15 Nd2 and Nb3 was stronger, preventing ... a6-a5. In this case Black's position would have been more passive.' (Botvinnik)

15 ... c6!

Tal suggests not blocking the bishop – 15 ... Nb6 16 Nd3 Nc4 17 Nc5 Bc6, but the reinforcement of the b5-pawn also has its point.

16 Nd3 Nb6?!

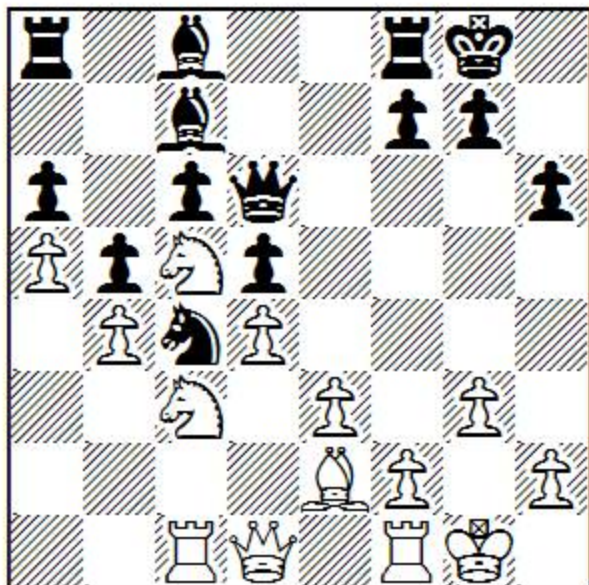
Only the immediate 16 ... a5! would have enabled Black to exploit White's inaccuracy (15 Ne1?!) in the implementation of his strategically correct plan. The black rook would have been freed from the need to defend the pawn, and after ... a5-a4 and ... Nd7-b6-c4 the a3-pawn could now have become a weakness.

17 a4! (an excellent reply, forcing Black to think constantly about the defence of his a6-pawn) **17 ... Bd8?!**

This move, which Tal considered to be the only possibility of obtaining at least some counterplay, was rightly condemned by Botvinnik and Karpov. The former suggested instead 17 ... Nc4 18 Nc5 Rab8 (when there can follow 19 Bd3 Bd8 20 a5 Bc7 21 g3 Qe7 22 Qc2 Bd6 23 Ne2 Rbe8), and the latter – 17 ... Rad8 18 Nc5 Bc8 ('with his rook at d8 and bishop at f6, Black would not have to fear too much the breakthrough in the centre'). But best was probably 17 ... Rae8 18 Nc5 Bc8 19 Ra1 (19 Bg4 Qc7) 19 ... Nd7. Everywhere White is 'slightly better', but for the moment he has nothing real.

With the ineffective regrouping made by Spassky, a gradual reduction in Black's defensive resources begins, although, as often happened in the analysis of games that were of exceptional importance for the course of chess history, the evaluation of subsequent events was influenced by the final result.

18 Nc5 Bc8 19 a5! Bc7 20 g3 Nc4



Black has carried out his intention, but the road to equality had not become any easier, especially after the timely opening of the centre by the opponent. As for Black's pride – his knight at c4, it is worth remembering Botvinnik's comments on the aforementioned game with Lasker: 'I realised that the Doctor had deceived me. The knight is beautifully placed at c4, but what next?' To activate his bishops, Black had to advance his f- and g-pawns, seriously weakening the defences of his own king. However, Lasker was unable to choose a convenient moment for the opening of the centre, and the game ended in a draw.

21 e4! Bh3

‘This is possibly the decisive mistake.’ (Tal). This evaluation should more probably have been applied to 17 ... Bd8, which began a manoeuvre, the aim of which was in fact to secure the h3-square for the other bishop. Tal recommends 21 ... dxe4 22 N3xe4 Qg6. Then 23 Bxc4 bxc4 24 Rxc4 Bh3 25 Re1 Rfe8 would certainly have allowed Black to activate his game, but the cool-headed 23 Re1! Kh8 (23 ... Bh3 is just as hopeless as in the game) 24 Nd2! would have retained White’s advantage.

22 Re1!

Another promising plan for strengthening the position was 22 e5 Qe7 23 Re1, but Karpov is consistent in his intention to open the centre while Black’s forces are poorly coordinated.

22 ... dxe4

It is not possible for Black to maintain his centre. Botvinnik thought that 22 ... Rfe8 was more tenacious, but then White could have switched to playing for a bind – 23 e5 Qg6 24 Bd3 Bf5 25 Ne2 Bxd3 26 Nf4, or continued his pressure in the centre – 23 Bf3.

23 N3xe4 Qg6

The choice for an army, that has lost its coordination, is limited. The ‘more cautious’ (according to Botvinnik) 23 ... Qd8 would not have brought any relief in view of 24 Qb3! (24 Bxc4 bxc4 25 Qc2! is also interesting, with the idea of 25 ... Qxd4 26 Rcd1 Qe5 27 Nxa6!), and Black has no acceptable continuation: 24 ... Qxd4 25 g4! f5 26 Rcd1! Qe5 27 Nd6! and wins.

24 Bh5!

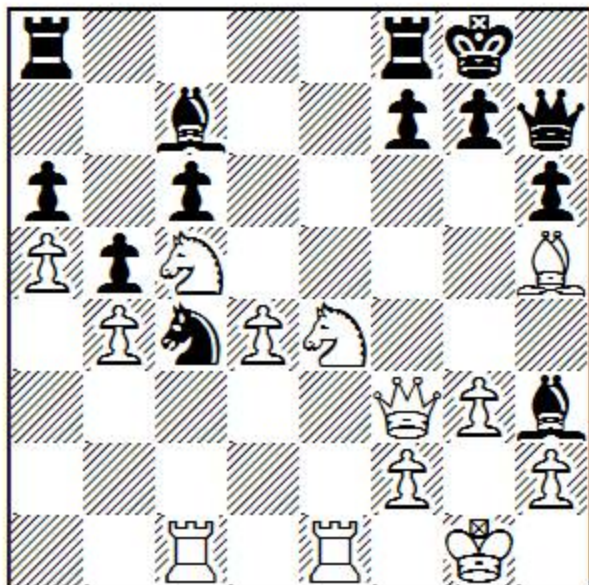
Karpov continues to strengthen his position, not allowing the opponent even a semblance of counterplay after 24 Bxc4 bxc4 25 Qe2 Bf4 26 Ra1 Rfe8 27 Qe4 Kh8.

24 ... Qh7

The active 24 ... Qf5, in the hope of changing the course of the game in the complications after 25 Rc3! Qd5 26 g4! f5 27 Rxh3 fxe4 would have resulted in a bad endgame: 28 Bg6 Nd6 29 Rh5 Qa2 (after 29 ... Qc4 30 Qd2! Rf6 31 Rc1 the queen is lost) 30 Qe2! Qxe2 31 Rxe2.

25 Qf3

25 Nd2!? Nxd2 26 Qxd2 Qf5 27 Qd1! Rfd8 28 Re7 g6 29 Bf3 Bd6 30 Re1 is also advantageous to White – the chronic weakness of Black’s queenside condemns him to lengthy suffering.



25 ... f5?

By conclusively shutting his strongest piece out of the game, Spassky effectively signs his own death warrant. Fascinating events would have developed in the event of 25 ... Bf5 26 Nc3 Rfc8. Now 27 Qxc6 Bf4 28 Bxf7+ Kh8 is not so clear, but the 27 d5! breakthrough would have provoked tactical complications, leading to a win for White: 27 ... Ne5 28 Qd1 Rd8 29 Qd4 f6 30 Nb7! Rdb8 31 dxc6 Nd3 32 Nd5 Be5 33 Ne7+ Kh8 34 Nd6! Bxd6 35 Qxd6 Rd8 36 Qxd8+! Rxd8 37 c7 Rf8 38 Bg6! Bxg6 39 c8Q Be8 40 Nf5 Nxe1 41 Rxe1 Qg8 42 Qxa6 Qd5 43 Qd6 etc.

Botvinnik and Karpov consider 25 ... Qf5 to be the last chance, for example: 26 Qxf5 (26 Rc3 Qd5!) 26 ... Bxf5 27 Bf3 Rfc8 (27 ... Rfd8? 28 Nc3! Rxd4 29 Bxc6 Ra7 30 Bxb5!) 28 Be2! Nd6 29 Bd3 'with advantage to White' (Karpov). Indeed, after 29 ... Nxe4 30 Bxe4 Bxe4 31 Nxe4 f5? 32 Nc5 Bd6 33 Re6 White has a winning position, but 29 ... Bh7! still sets some problems. In addition, 31 ... Bb8 is clearly stronger, with saving chances: 32 Kg2 (32 d5 f5!) 32 ... Ba7 33 Nd6 Rd8 34 Rxc6 Bxd4 35 Re7 Bc3!, and the outcome is not at all clear. Therefore it is better to play 29 Nd2! Bd8 30 Nf3! Rc7 31 Ne5 with very strong pressure, or immediately 27 Be2!? Nd6 28 Bd3 Nxe4 29 Bxe4 Bxe4 30 Nxe4 f5 31 Nc5 Bd6 32 Re6 Bxc5 33 dxc5 Rac8 34 Rd1 with excellent chances in the rook endgame. Therefore after 27 Be2 (or 27

Bf3 Rfc8 28 Be2) it makes sense for Black to think about a pawn sacrifice: 27 ... Rfe8 28 Bxc4 bxc4 29 Rxc4 Bd6! 30 f3 h5! 31 Kf2 Bf8, relying on the saving power of the two bishops.

26 Nc3 g6 27 Qxc6! gxh5 28 Nd5! (the game is decided) 28 ... f4 29 Re7! Qf5
If 29 ... fxg3, with the faint hope of 30 Rxh7?? gxf2+ 31 Kh1 f1Q+ 32 Rxf1 Rxf1 mate, White wins most simply by 30 Nf6+! Rxf6 31 Qxa8+ Rf8 32 Qxf8+ Kxf8 33 Rxh7.

30 Rxc7 Rae8 31 Qxh6 Rf7 32 Rxf7

The fearfully strong 32 Nd7! would have forced Black to give up his most valuable piece almost for nothing.

32 ... Kxf7 33 Qxf4 Re2 34 Qc7+ Kf8 35 Nf4 1-0

Black resigned, and Karpov sealed the match 4-1 (with six draws).

This game, like the match as whole, showed how completely unfounded was the theory of the 'clear head', professed by Spassky and his second. It became very obvious: to achieve consistent successes at high level, it was not enough to have only a general impression about the opening set-ups employed and a handful of ideas. Without extensive and exact knowledge, it is impossible to obtain the desired middlegame positions, and you have to be satisfied with those into which the opponent lures you, by no means the desired ones, so that your 'clear head' should have wide scope for creativity.

Alas, after this defeat Spassky did not find in himself the strength to readjust to serious, systematic work, and his results began steadily, year by year, to decline. And Karpov became for ever a difficult opponent for him: the overall score of their games with the classical time control was +13-1=20 in favour of the 12th world champion.

Karpov: 'Of all the matches that I have ever played, this was the one where chess itself and improvisation played the greatest role. Many years later Spassky said to me: 'I can't play against you, because I don't understand your play, I don't understand the course of your thinking ... ') But to understand and acknowledge this, it was not enough for him to lose this match; he needed years of reflection, years of observing my play. Fortunately, this match did not spoil our relations. And the subsequent gradual departure from the chess elite of this wonderful fighter is not something that I would put down to me – it was not I who broke him, but Fischer. And how the struggle between us would have gone, if before me there had not been Fischer, one can only surmise.'

Here are two more opinions by interested persons – former world champions.

Tal: 'Karpov's victory over Spassky made a greater impression on me than Korchnoi's win against Petrosian. I was especially interested in the question of how Karpov would react to his first loss, when he was not accustomed to losing and had no immunity to defeats. But then came the 2nd game, and the 3rd: first a Caro-Kann Defence, and then 1 d4. You know, this is already the response not of a boy, but a man. I remember my 1965 match with Spassky. Somewhere after the 5th game they tried to persuade me: "Give up your 1 e4. Change the tune. Divert him." But by then I was already "wound up". But the present-day Karpov, although younger than that Tal, did not become wound up! Karpov's opening repertoire is trained, like the voice of a very good singer. He is careful with it, and he avoids disclosing it beforehand. Many of his opening patterns remind one of Furman's handling of the opening. Here the young player trusts his mentor absolutely unquestioningly. And not without reason. Furman has an exceptionally subtle feeling for the opening and he has an enormous understanding of the game in general.'

Botvinnik: 'The match with Spassky was a kind of leap into the unknown: previously Karpov had not enjoyed any similar success. When he imposed on his opponent a forceful, uncompromising battle, Spassky suffered four defeats in nine games. After the eleventh game the score was 7-4 – the same, as in the match in Reykjavik. Karpov played brilliantly. It is hard to say where he displayed the greater mastery – in attack or defence. The calculation of variations was combined with skilful positional play. Karpov realised that he could surpass Spassky only if he gave everything to chess ... This match clarified the situation at the chess summit. At least, for those who wanted to recognise this.'

Yes, this was a truly historic match – the intersection of two bright stars: one rising, and the other slowly setting, as at one time in the match between Keres and Euwe (cf. Volume 2). This was, in effect, Spassky's last real chance of fighting for the return of his world title! Three years later his final Candidates match with Korchnoi looked more like the agony of a great player (cf. the chapter 'Belgrade Revenge'), whereas against Karpov, especially at the start, Spassky was still full of strength and ambition, almost as in his best years.

Incidentally, I am surprised that so many experts predicted a win for Spassky. Apparently, at that time they did not yet pay sufficient attention to ratings – objective indicators of a player's strength. This is how the quartet of candidates looked on 1 July 1973: Karpov – 2660, Spassky – 2655, Korchnoi – 2650, Petrosian – 2640. That is, one can talk about an approximate equality of strength. Then Spassky gained points in the USSR Championship and his match with Byrne, as did Karpov in the Madrid tournament and his match with Polugayevsky. The FIDE ratings were next published on 1 May 1974, now taking account of the Candidates semi-final matches: Karpov – 2700(!), Korchnoi – 2670, Spassky – 2650, Petrosian – 2640.

These are not empty figures. Over a period of many years Karpov achieved consistently good results, and above all he demonstrated a consistently high standard of play. And he achieved his first creative peak in the encounter with Spassky. It was from this match, and not from April 1975, that the Anatoly Karpov era begins.

Coronation

So, there only remained the final match with Korchnoi. 'When I was asked how I rated my chances, I invariably replied: the play will show, but I myself was already thinking about Fischer. And no one heard me saying that this was not my cycle any more,' remembers Karpov. Botvinnik also believed in him: 'Don't worry,' he replied to the questions of chess fans, 'Karpov didn't win against Polugayevsky and Spassky, in order to lose to Korchnoi.'

But first, a month after the Candidates semi-final matches, there was the World Olympiad (Nice, June 1974), timed to coincide with the 50th anniversary of FIDE. The organisers created excellent playing conditions, hoping that the 'Tournament of Nations' would become Fischer's first appearance in his capacity as world champion. The intrigue was stirred up by the fact that for the first time the USSR team would be led by Karpov – the new contender for the crown, who was dreaming of doing battle with the champion. Their clash was awaited with enormous interest. But, alas, Fischer did not arrive ...

The splendid Soviet six – Karpov, Korchnoi, Spassky, Petrosian, reserves Tal and Kuzmin – went through the entire Olympiad without a single defeat and achieved one of the best results in history: 1. USSR – 46 out of 60; 2. Yugoslavia – 37½; 3. USA – 36½, etc.

Karpov played especially well. Like Tal in his time, in just two years he had risen from one of the reserves to board one. After five successive wins in the preliminary group, he added a sixth at the start of the final tournament – against Hort, and then, after a drawing respite, he also made short work of Unzicker.

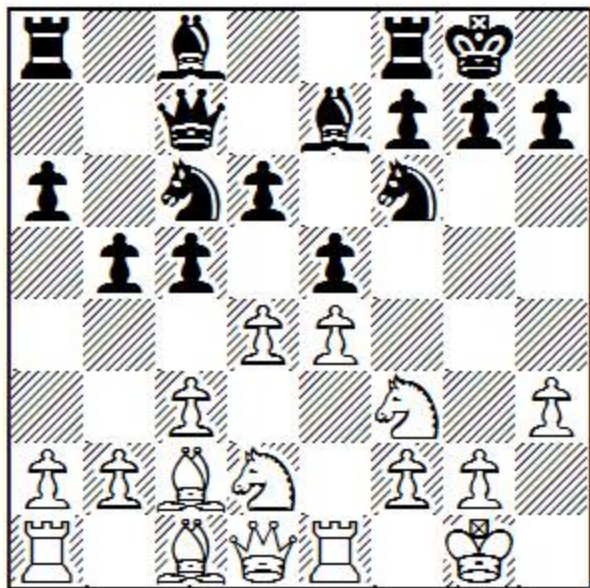
Game 66

A.Karpov-W.Unzicker

World Olympiad, Nice 1974

Ruy Lopez C98

1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bb5 a6 4 Ba4 Nf6 5 0-0 Be7 6 Re1 b5 7 Bb3 d6 8 c3 0-0 9 h3 Na5
(9 ... Nb8 – *Game Nos. 51, 70 and 102*) 10 Bc2 c5 11 d4 Qc7 12 Nbd2 Nc6



An old variation of the Chigorin System, the popularity of which fell sharply after this game. Black began preferring 12 ... cxd4 13 cxd4 Nc6! (this is rather better than 13 ... Bb7 – *Volume 4, Game No.54*).

13 d5!

The strongest continuation (Reshevsky and Fischer played 13 dxc5 – cf. *Volume 4, Game No.19*). For a long time the d5-pawn secures White a spatial advantage and the associated scope for manoeuvring his pieces.

13 ... Nd8

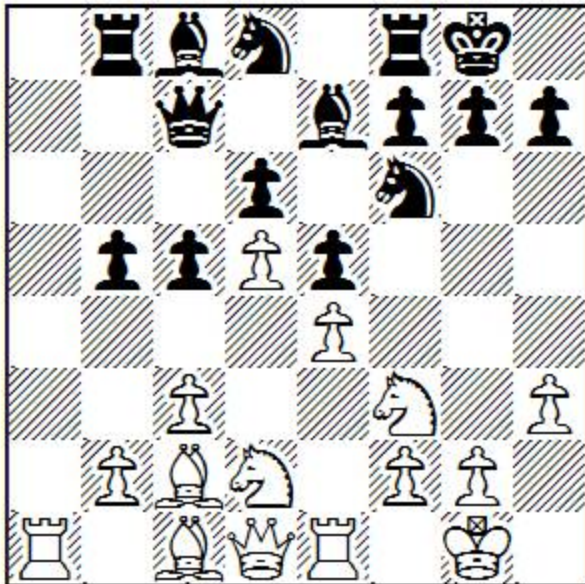
Following Rubinstein. After 13 ... Na5 14 b3! the knight has only the b7-square. Here the game Geller-Mecking (Palma de Mallorca Interzonal 1970) can be considered a model example of White's play: 14 ... Bd7 15 Nf1 Nb7 16 Ng3! (more flexible than 16 c4, Karpov-Andersson, Stockholm 1969) 16 ... c4 17 b4 Rfc8 18 Nf5 Bf8 19 Nh2 a5 20 Re3 axb4 21 cxb4 Bxf5 22 exf5 c3 23 Ng4 Be7 24 Nxf6+ Bxf6 25 Re4! Qd7 26 Qf3 with an advantage.

14 a4 (Black's rooks are not connected, and this undermining move is bound to be unpleasant for him) 14 ... Rb8 15 axb5

The fashion for the old move 13 d5 was revived by the game Stein-Ivkov (Amsterdam Interzonal 1964), where after 15 c4 Bd7?! 16 axb5 axb5 17 cxb5 Bxb5 18 Ba4 Ra8 19 Re3 Nb7 20 Rea3 White seized control of the a-file. 15 ... b4 is sounder, then ... Ne8, ... g7-g6 and ... f7-f6 (Bogoljubow-Rubinstein, Baden-Baden 1925; Breslau 1925).

15 ... axb5

What should White play?

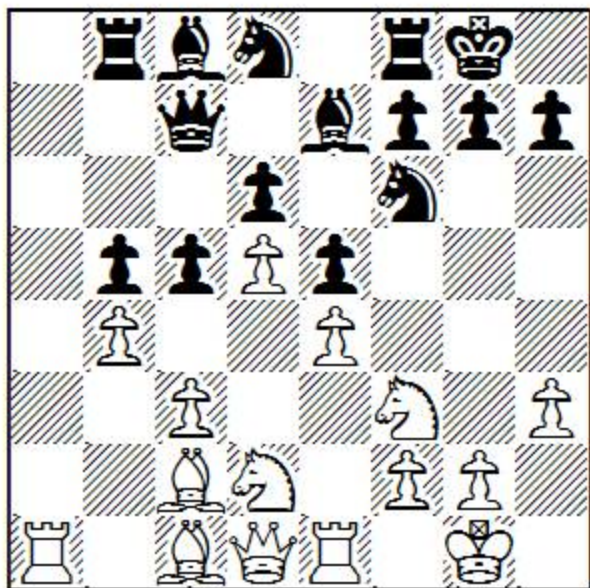


16 b4!

A typical modern procedure in such positions. White does not give up his offensive on the kingside, but, by opening a second front, he wants to create more favourable conditions for it. However, if the opponent makes a poor response, he can also achieve much on the

queenside, by exploiting the a-file and the weakness of the b5-pawn (cf. the note to Black's 16th move).

After the straightforward 16 Nf1 the great Akiba demonstrated a plan of defence back in the early 20th century, which immediately became standard: 16 ... Ne8 17 g4 g6 18 Ng3 Ng7 19 Kh1 f6 20 Rg1 Nf7 21 Be3 Bd7 22 Qe2 Ra8 (22 ... Ng5!?) 23 Nd2 Kh8 24 b3 Qb7 25 Bd3 Ra6! (Bernstein-Rubinstein, Ostend 1907), or 22 Qf1 Ra8 23 Qg2 Rxa1 24 Rxa1 Qb7 25 Kh2 Ra8 26 Qf1 Ra6! 27 Nd2 Qa8 (Thomas-Rubinstein, Baden-Baden 1925). Or 16 c4 b4 17 Nf1 Ne8 18 g4 g6 19 Bh6 Ng7 20 Ne3 f6 21 Kg2 Nf7 with equality (Bogoljubow-Rubinstein, Berlin 1926).



16 ... Nb7

The helplessness of this knight constitutes a considerable problem for Black. Imitating Rubinstein, he would like to play 16 ... Ne8 with the intention of 17 Nf1 g6 18 g4 Ng7 19 Ng3 f6 and ... Nf7, but here he has to reckon with 17 bxc5!, when both 17 ... dxc5 18 c4 b4 19 Nb3 and 17 ... Qxc5 18 Re3 Nb7 19 Ba3 involve new drawbacks: in the first case the c5-pawn becomes a target, and in the second case – the b5-pawn.

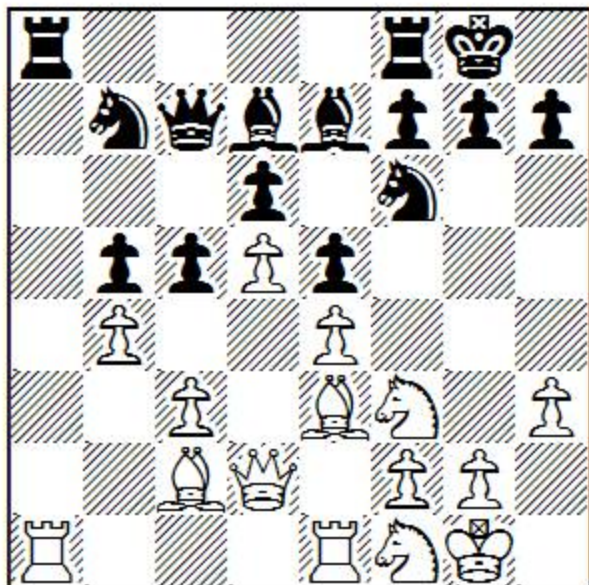
16 ... c4 has usually been played, but this move too has an obvious drawback: White acquires the additional resource f2-f4, and after ... e5xf4 not only does Black acquire the e5-square, but White also gains the important d4-square for his knight. After 17 Nf1 Ne8 18 N3h2 the

active 18 ... f5? is inappropriate: 19 exf5 (the e4-square becomes an important element of White's positional advantage) 19 ... Bxf5 20 Bxf5 Rxf5 21 Be3 Rf8 22 Nf3 Nf6 23 Ng3 Nf7 24 Ra7! Rb7 25 Ra5 (Geller-Smyslov, Palma de Mallorca Interzonal 1970). 18 ... f6 is more restrained, but here too after 19 f4 Nf7 20 Nf3 g6 21 f5 Ng7 22 g4 Black is in difficulties (Karpov-Spassky, 41st USSR Championship, Moscow 1973).

17 Nf1 Bd7 18 Be3

It is less promising to play 18 Bd2 Ra8 19 Ne3 Rfc8 20 Kh2 Rxa1 21 Qxa1 Qd8! 22 Qa7 Ra8! 23 Qxb7 Rb8 24 Qa7 $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ (Spassky-Korchnoi, 1st matchgame, Kiev 1968).

18 ... Ra8 19 Qd2



19 ... Rfc8?

Black choose an incorrect set-up of his heavy pieces and because of this he loses the battle for the a-file. The correct way was pointed out by Karpov himself: 19 ... Rfb8 20 Bd3 Qc8!, after which Black exchanges one pair of rooks and increases his chances of a successful defence.

20 Bd3 g6 21 Ng3 Bf8 (fighting for the a-file would have lost a pawn: 21 ... Qd8? 22 Rxa8 Rxa8 23 bxc5 Nxc5 24 Bxc5 dxc5 25 Nxe5) **22 Ra2! c4**

The invasion of the queen after 22 ... Rxa2 23 Qxa2 cxb4 24 cxb4 Qc3 would merely have uncovered another weakness in Black's

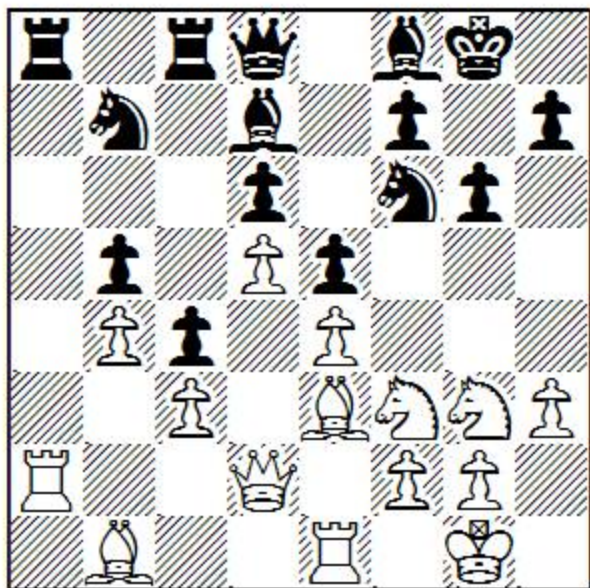
position – the b5-pawn: 25 Qb1 Qa3 26 Rc1 Rxc1+ 27 Bxc1 Qa4 28 Be3 Be7 29 Ne2.

23 Bb1

The aim of this move, preventing the rapid concentration of white pieces on the a-file, is nothing to do with overprotecting the e4-pawn. Karpov does not want to allow his opponent the slightest counter-chances, and so he radically prevents ... f7-f5.

23 ... Qd8

‘Also after 23 ... Nd8 24 Re2 there would have been no contest for the a-file. In addition, Black would also have had to reckon with 24 Rxa8 Rxa8 25 Bh6.’ (Karpov)



24 Ba7!

This original manoeuvre became a well-known technique in the fight for the open file after the 10th game of the Spassky-Karpov match (*Game No.64*). There Karpov managed to defend himself, and now he himself tests its effectiveness. White temporarily blocks the a-file, concentrating his heavy pieces on it under cover of the bishop, and at a convenient moment, after retreating the bishop, he invades the opponent's position. Largely because of the bad position of his knight at b7, it is hard for Black to counter this obvious intention.

Incidentally, in a similar situation (true, in another classical opening – the Queen's Gambit) I employed the manoeuvre Bd3-h7 to seize

control of the h-file (Kasparov-Karpov, 21st matchgame, Moscow 1985).

24 ... Ne8 25 Bc2 Nc7 26 Rea1 Qe7 27 Bb1 Be8

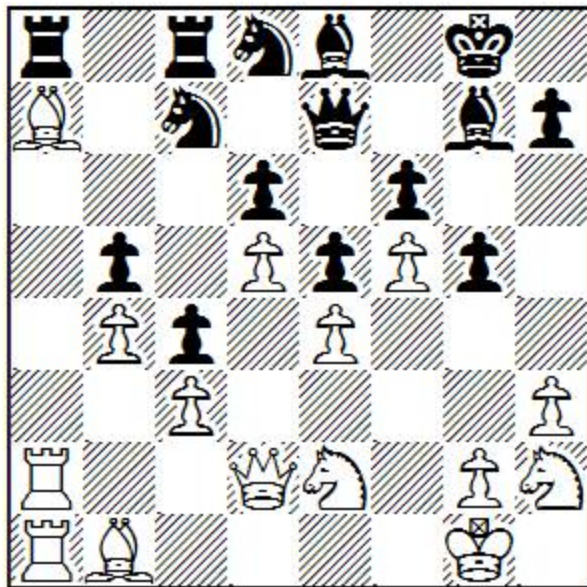
'Black has done his best to prepare for play on the queenside, by linking his forces. But White, exploiting his spatial advantage and the great manoeuvrability of his pieces, begins action on the other flank.' (Karpov)

28 Ne2 Nd8 29 Nh2 Bg7 30 f4! f6?

Positional capitulation. 30 ... exf4 31 Nxf4 f6 32 Nf3 Nf7 33 Nd4 Ne5 was essential, allowing the opponent a strong point in the centre, but gaining the outpost at e5.

31 f5 g5?!

This pawn should not have been moved. 31 ... gxf5 32 exf5 Nf7 33 Be3 Qf8 (Karpov) 34 Ng4 was hardly any better for Black. The toughest defence was to stay put, avoiding any pawn advances. Now, however, the light squares on Black's kingside are weakened, and Karpov begins consistently carrying out an advantageous operation to exchange the light-squared bishops.



32 Bc2! Bf7

The weakness of the light-squared periphery cannot be eliminated: 32 ... h5 33 Bd1 Kh7 34 Ng3 h4 (34 ... Kh6? 35 h4!) 35 Ngf1 Nf7 36 Bh5 and wins.

33 Ng3 Nb7 34 Bd1! h6?!

This pointless advance, which merely weakens the light squares conclusively, should have been avoided.

35 Bh5 Qe8 36 Qd1! Nd8 37 Ra3 Kf8 38 R1a2 Kg8 39 Ng4 Kf8 40 Ne3 Kg8 41 Bxf7+ Nxf7 42 Qh5! Nd8

If 42 ... Nh8 Karpov gives the amusing variation 43 Ng4 Qxh5 44 Nxh5 Kf7 45 Bb6 Rxa3 46 Rxa3 Ra8 47 Rxa8 Nxa8 48 Bd8 with complete zugzwang!

43 Qg6! (thanks to the pawn having moved to h6) **43 ... Kh8 44 Nh5! 1-0**

Black resigns: there is no point in suffering after 44 ... Qf7 45 Ng4 Ne8 46 Bb6.

‘An extraordinary phenomenon, a triumph of supreme strategy,’ the press wrote about this game. And indeed, it is a classic example of how to play positions with a closed centre. ‘When after the game Unzicker in Russian suddenly cursed his position “with this idiotic black knight, which simply cannot leap out of its cage,” I nearly fell off my chair in surprise,’ related Anatoly. Meanwhile, Tal already remarked here that playing to restrict the mobility of an enemy knight was one of Karpov’s favourite strategic methods.

After gaining a further three wins with White he achieved the best result on board one (+10=4) without any visible tension. Karpov did not play in the last two rounds, since as a contender for the crown he was taking part in the work of the FIDE Congress, which had to approve the regulations for the world championship match the following year. The other contender, Korchnoi, replaced his young colleague on board one, after asking him to speak at the Congress on behalf of them both.

Karpov: ‘We agreed to fight to the bitter end against three of Fischer’s demands: 1) an unlimited match; 2) to ten wins; 3) with a 9-9 score, victory would be awarded to the world champion. However, after our match, which he lost, Korchnoi began saying that Fischer’s demands were justified, and that they should have been accepted. I think that this was not very nice on his part.’

Why did Korchnoi change his position? He spoke out publicly on this vexed question in an interview on the eve of the historic 32nd game of the match in Baguio (1978) and then in his book *Antichess*:

‘With the score at 5-5, after three months of intensive struggle, I took a quite different view on the haggling that preceded the passing of the chess crown from Fischer to Karpov ... Had not Fischer been right, when he demanded that the world champion should defend his title with

a two-point advantage – that the challenger should win by a score of 10-8, but that with a score of 9-9 the champion would retain his title? Yes, now I realised that this was quite natural: the world champion deserves it, to say nothing of the fact that, with the scores level, further play to the first win is a pure lottery, and whoever wins, it is no longer convincing!’

But in the summer of 1974 the two ‘Ks’ were still presenting a united front, expressing the Soviet point of view. The atmosphere at the Congress was extremely heated – after ultimatums sent by the world champion by telegram the question was basically this: ‘Either FIDE or Fischer.’ Therefore Karpov’s speech provoked a mixed reaction. Roshal: ‘Some of the delegates interrupted him, and the chairman did not support him, but, on the contrary, remarked that he was repeating what had been said earlier. Karpov blushed angrily, was silent for almost a minute, and then quite calmly added: ‘I consider these remarks to be disrespectful.’ And he stepped down into the hall, where he was applauded by some of those who only just before had been preventing him from speaking.’

As a result of the work of two congresses – this and the extraordinary one (March 1975) – all Fischer’s demands were met, apart from one: that with a 9-9 score the champion would retain his title (more details about these events are given in Volume 4). His famous ‘I resign my FIDE world chess champion title’ declaration was sent by Bobby to Nice, which provoked a rhetorical question by Najdorf: ‘Why, if Fischer is giving up his title, is the final Candidates match not being held under world championship match regulations?’

The Karpov-Korchnoi match (Moscow, autumn 1974), which effectively became a clash for the world championship, was played to five wins by one of the participants, but with a limit of 24 games – fully comparable with the regulations of previous matches for the crown. What were the pre-match forecasts?

‘During the Olympiad in Nice, Timman mentioned that, as before, Korchnoi still gets into time-trouble. Karpov, by contrast, plays easily, with a big reserve on his clock, and this, in Jan’s opinion, gives him an advantage in the match. Andersson and Portisch considered the two players’ chances to be roughly equal. Najdorf gave preference to Karpov, while Hort, drawing attention to Karpov’s consistently good form, at the same time suggested that Korchnoi had been husbanding his strength somewhat in Nice, and that the final match would become

a “war of nerves”. Soviet grandmasters were usually cautious in their predictions. Polugayevsky mentioned that on Karpov’s side were his age, consistency of results, and constant and steady progress (“He played much more strongly against Spassky than against me”). Taimanov spoke about the fact that Korchnoi sometimes “exposes himself” too much, and about the stability of Karpov’s play and his growing strength: “In my opinion, sooner or later he will be world champion”. To a certain extent this pronouncement was similar to the opinion of Larsen – in chess style he was closer to Korchnoi, but the voice of reason suggested: Karpov.’ (Roshal)

Not long before the match, Karpov’s training staff received a powerful reinforcement: Furman and Razuvaev were joined by Efim Geller – a player of encyclopaedic knowledge and brilliant attacking style. According to Razuvaev, somewhere towards the finish of the match Geller expressed his dissatisfaction with Karpov’s play to Furman and angrily repeated: ‘Tolya must be re-taught: he should play more aggressively!’ Furman listened for a long time to his colleague, silently smoking a cigarette, and then said: ‘Do you know what, Fima? If you don’t like it, find yourself another lad and teach him to play how you think he should. But I am satisfied about everything in Tolya and I like the way he plays!’ An eloquent little scene: it is well known that Furman related to Karpov with paternal tenderness.

However, Geller had no grounds for criticism at the start of the match. After a fighting draw in the 1st game, Karpov gained a brilliant combinative win in the 2nd, employing one of the deep preparations of Efim Petrovich.

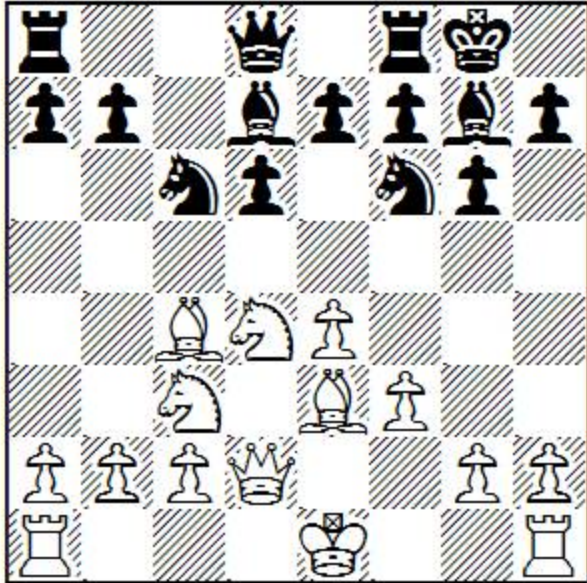
Game 67

A.Karpov-V.Korchnoi

Candidates Match, Moscow 1974, 2nd game

Sicilian Defence B78

1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Nf6 5 Nc3 g6 6 Be3 Bg7 7 f3 Nc6 8 Qd2 0-0 9 Bc4 (9 g4 – *Game No.87*) 9 ... Bd7 (9 ... Nxd4?! – *Volume 4, Game No.52*)



10 h4

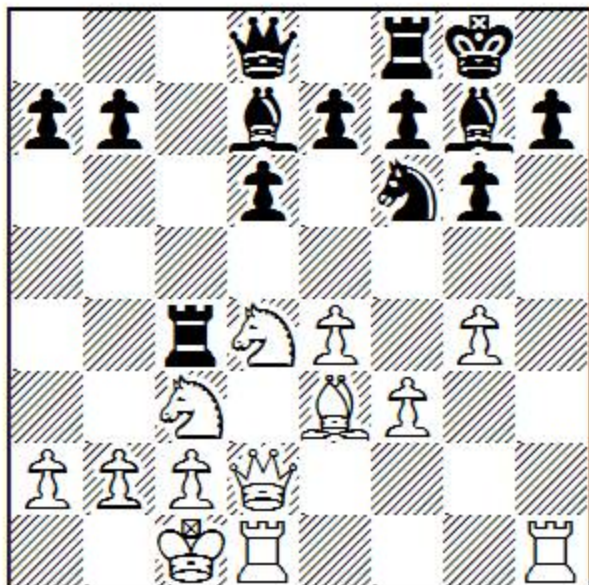
The fashion of those years – a very sharp variation with the advance of the h-pawn. Nowadays the flexible 10 0-0-0 Rc8 11 Bb3 Ne5 12 Kb1 is in vogue, and if 12 ... Nc4, then 13 Bxc4 Rxc4 14 g4!, preventing ... h7-h5.

10 ... Rc8 11 Bb3 Ne5 12 0-0-0 Nc4

This game, naturally, did not 'kill the Dragon', but it forced Black to work out new methods of defence. Later practice showed that better chances of restraining the attack and creating counterplay are given by the radical move 12 ... h5!, introduced into grandmaster practice by Miles and Sosonko. For details, see Volume 6.

13 Bxc4 Rxc4 14 h5 Nxh5 15 g4 Nf6

One of the best known *tabiyas* of the Dragon.



16 Nde2!?

The prelude to an interesting novelty. 17 e5! and 18 g5 is threatened, but the following comment by Karpov shows that even in the analysis of sharp positions he endeavoured to rely on reasoning of a general nature:

‘An attempt to support this move with variations was made by E.Chumak, a player from Dnepropetrovsk, who published an article on this topic in 1972. The logical basis for the retreat of the knight from the centre is roughly as follows. The c3-point is a very important one in the arrangement of the white pieces, against which Black concentrates his threats. Here a typical exchange sacrifice (... Rxc3) often occurs, when the opponent gains a strong attack (it is noteworthy that after the doubling of the white pawns on the c-file, Black’s position is so rich in possibilities that also without an attack, even in the endgame, he can maintain the balance – this was splendidly demonstrated in his games by the outstanding grandmaster Leonid Stein). Thus the main idea of 16 Nde2 is to support the c3-point. In addition, from e2 the knight can easily be switched for a direct attack on the enemy king.’

Apart from the prophylactic move in the game, White has a wide choice of attacking plans. Here are a few illustrations, arranged more or less in chronological order:

1) 16 e5 Nxg4 (or 16 ... dxe5 17 Nb3 Rc6! 18 Qh2 Rxc3! 19 bxc3 Qc8! with counterplay) 17 fxe4 Bxe4 18 Rdg1 dxe5 19 Rxe4 h5! 20 Rxe5 Rxe4! 21 Bxe4 exd4 22 Ne4 (or 22 Nd5) 22 ... gxe5 23 Rxe7+ Kxe7 24 Qg5+ Kh7 25 Qxe5+ Kg7 $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ (Chumak-Okhotnik, Dnepropetrovsk 1970);

2) 16 Bh6 Nxe4 17 Qe3 Rxc3 18 bxc3 Nf6 19 Bxe7 Kxe7 20 Rh2 (or 20 Rh4 Rg8 Tseshkovsky-Miles, Wijk aan Zee 1989) 20 ... Rh8 (20 ... Qc7 has also been played, but not 20 ... Qa5?! 21 Nb3 Qxa2 22 Qxe7 Qa3+ 23 Kb1 Re8 24 Qxd6 Qxd6 25 Rxd6 with advantage to White, as in the source game Geller-Korchnoi, 4th matchgame, Moscow 1971) 21 Nb3 Bc6 22 g5 Nh5 23 f4 Re8 24 f5 Qb6 25 Nd4 Qc5! (Kasparov-Piket, Tilburg 1989);

3) 16 Nd5 e6 17 Nxf6+ Qxf6 18 Qh2 Rfc8 19 Qxe7+ Kf8 20 c3?! b5! 21 Bh6 Bxe6+ 22 Qxe6+ Ke7 23 Qd2 b4, seizing the initiative (Geller-Ivkov, Amsterdam 1974), or 20 Kb1 e5 with sharp play (Kupreichik-Khalifman, 54th USSR Championship, Minsk 1987);

4) 16 Nb3 Re8! 17 e5 (17 Bh6 Bh8 18 Bg5 Qc8, as Khalifman played in 1991 against Nunn and Short) 17 ... Nxg4 18 fxe4 Bxe4 19 Rdg1 dxe5 20 Qh2 (after 20 Qxd8 Rxd8 21 Na5(d2) Rxc3! 22 bxc3 h5 the armada of black pawns is too strong) 20 ... h5 with chances for both sides;

5) 16 Kb1 (the fashion of the 1990s) 16 ... Qc7?! (16 ... Bxe4?! is also insufficient: 17 fxe4 Nxg4 18 Qe2 Anand-Topalov, Hilversum 1993) 17 g5 Nh5 18 Nd5 Qd8 19 b3 Rc8 20 Ne2 e6 21 Ndf4 Nxf4 22 Nxf4 Qc7 23 Qh2 h5 24 gxe6 Be5 25 h7+ Kh8 26 Bd4 and White has a dangerous attack (Anand-Khalifman, Moscow rapidplay 1995), but 16 ... Re8 is better.

On the whole, practice has shown that Black has adequate defensive resources in all these variations.

16 ... Qa5

To judge by the speed with which the two players made their moves (thereby emphasising the depth of their home preparation), this queen sortie was part of an aggressive defensive plan thought up beforehand, involving, as shown by the game, a certain risk. Korchnoi is ready to exchange his bishop at g7 for the sake of rapidly intensifying his attacking potential.

Now, summing up the results of the analyses, it can be concluded that Black was wrong not to play 16 ... Re8!, enabling him to avoid the exchange of his g7-bishop, which cements together his king's

defences. After the sharp prelude 17 Bh6 Bh8 18 e5 Nxg4! 19 fxg4 the play can proceed in two ways:

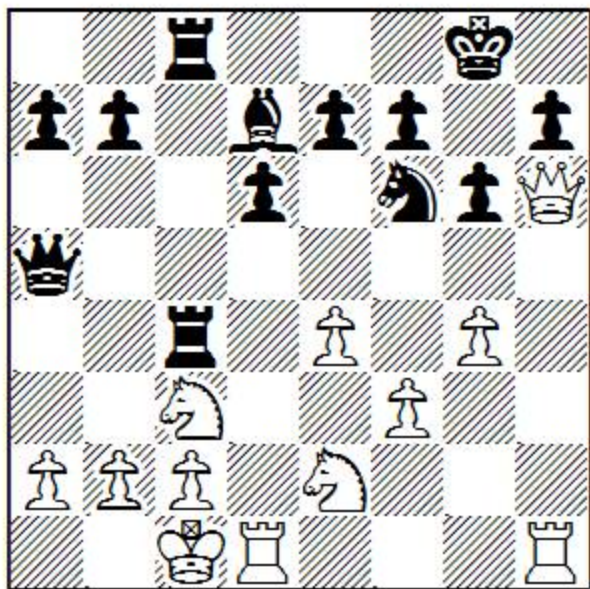
1) 19 ... Bxg4 20 exd6 Qxd6 21 Qxd6 exd6 22 Rxd6 (Beliavsky-Filguth, Caracas 1976), and despite White's material advantage, the position is unclear after 22 ... Be5 23 Rd3 f6;

2) 19 ... Bxe5 20 Bf4 Qa5 (20 ... Bg7!? has also several times shown itself to be good) 21 Bxe5 Qxe5 – this position has occurred in dozens of games, and Black can be satisfied with the results.

17 Bh6! Bxh6

In his time grandmaster Simagin successfully showed that for the sake of retaining the g7-bishop Black can go in for an exchange sacrifice – 17 ... Bh8 18 Bxf8 Kxf8, and this became a typical procedure for creating counterplay in such positions. But here this is ineffective, since there are no targets in White's position that can be attacked. Botvinnik judged this position to be theoretically won, but I would add that Black nevertheless retains possibilities of continuing the fight.

18 Qxh6 Rfc8



19 Rd3

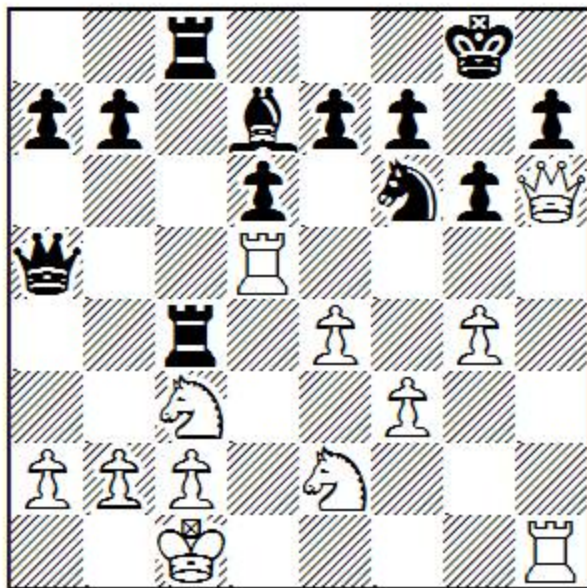
'Up till this point both players had been moving almost instantly, but here Korchnoi thought for a long time. And indeed, he had something to think about ... The novelty 19 Rd3!, overprotecting the c3-point, in a

number of variations simultaneously frees the knight at e2 for the attack.' (Karpov)

At the start of a match Korchnoi used to employ a risky strategy, based on the one-off employment of rare openings in his repertoire. This was apparently how he conceived the idea of playing the 'Dragon', which at that time had the reputation of being a complicated variation, with numerous positions lacking a clear evaluation. During the three previous years he had employed it in only three games, but what games! Twice in his Candidates match with Geller (1971) and a month before that in the 5th game of a training match with ... Karpov.

Therefore the appearance of the 'Dragon' was predictable, and Karpov's powerful team had prepared their protégé well, in addition developing a new plan for White. To all appearances, Korchnoi's preparation for the duel with his young opponent was not so thorough and deep.

Meanwhile, analysis shows that 19 Rd5, which before this game was considered the main move, is no less effective than Karpov's novelty, the main virtues of which are its unexpectedness and the enhanced solidity of the white king's shelter.



Analysis diagram

Botvinnik writes that Black had a choice between a slightly inferior endgame after 19 ... Qd8 and the complications following 19 ... R4c5?,

‘which, apparently, were what Korchnoi had in mind.’ However, there are no ‘complications’ after the obvious 20 g5 Nh5 21 Nf4. But 19 ... R8c5 can be considered: 20 g5 Nh5 21 Rxc5 Rxc5! (21 ... Qxc5? 22 Nd5 Rxc2+ 23 Kd1! is bad for Black) 22 Nf4 Rxc5 23 Ncd5 Rxd5 24 Nxd5 Qd8 – Black’s position is not easy to breach.

It only remains to study 19 ... Qd8 more carefully. Chumak, and later Botvinnik, considered only 20 g5 Nh5 21 Nf4 Qf8 22 Qxf8+ Kxf8 23 Nxh5 gxh5 24 Rxh5 Kg7 with somewhat the better ending for White.

The energetic 20 e5 dxe5 21 Rd2 is more dangerous (for White too!). Karpov looked only at 21 g5 Nh5 22 Ng3 Qf8 23 Rxh5 gxh5 24 Rxd7 Qxh6 25 gxh6 with the evaluation: ‘the outside passed pawn gives Black good counter-chances.’ This is indeed, so since the h-pawn suddenly becomes fearfully strong: 25 ... h4! 26 Nf5 Kf8 27 Rxe7 h3 28 Rxe5 R8c5 29 Rxc5 Rxc5 30 Ng3 h2, and it is now White’s position that gives some cause for alarm.

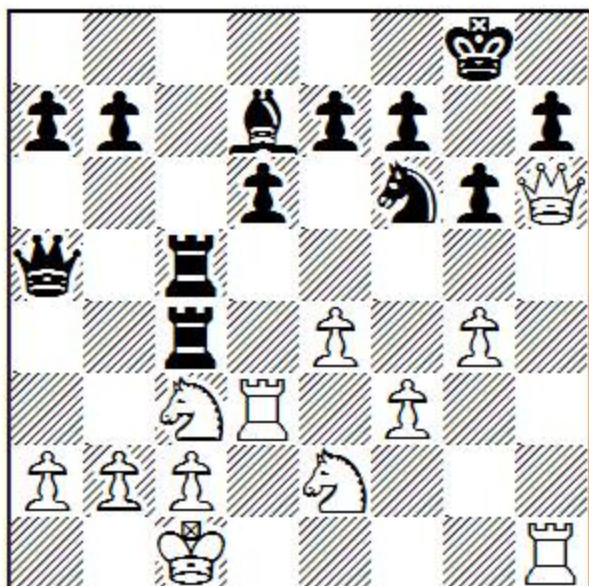
After 21 Rd2 it is bad to play 21 ... Qe8? because of 22 Nd5!, but 21 ... Qf8 22 Qxf8+ Rxf8 23 g5 Bc6 24 gxf6 exf6 leads to a complicated endgame. 21 ... Qc7! 22 Nd5 Rxc2+ 23 Kb1 Rxd2 24 Nxc7 Rxe2 25 Nd5 Re8 is even more promising, as played in one correspondence game. Black’s excellent compensation for the queen allows him to think of more than a draw. 20 g5 is definitely stronger than 20 e5, but Black’s choice between 19 ... Qd8 and 19 ... R8c5 is not so obvious.

19 ... R4c5?

The first independent move – and immediately a decisive mistake. After thinking for more than half an hour in an unfamiliar and undoubtedly critical situation, out of four possibilities Korchnoi chose the one that led most quickly and by force ... to a loss!

Karpov agrees with Botvinnik, that the best practical chance was 19 ... Qd8. ‘Black has nothing worse to fear than a slightly inferior endgame.’ (Botvinnik). He obviously had in mind 20 g5 Nh5 21 Nf4 Qf8 22 Nxh5 Qxh6 23 gxh6 gxh5. The argument about the virtues of this endgame ceased to be topical after Shamkovich published a new idea – 20 Nd5! Rxc2+ (some consider that 20 ... e6 21 Nxf6+ Qxf6 22 Qxh7+ Kf8 is safer, although after 23 c3 White’s initiative is undisputed) 21 Kb1 e6 22 Ndc3! Black loses the exchange, gaining two pawns in return – which would be quite sufficient, except that the initiative remains with White.

Let us examine the consequences of 19 ... R8c5, which before the match Karpov and his trainers considered to be best.



Analysis diagram

Indeed, after 20 g5 Nh5 (but not 20 ... Rxc3 21 Rd5!) the variations 21 Nf4 Rxc3 22 Rxc3 Rxc3 23 Nd5 Rxd5 24 exd5 Qxd5 and 21 Ng3 Rxc3 22 Rxc3 Rxc3 23 Rxc3 Rxc3 24 exd5 Qxd5 (things are simpler for White after 22 ... Rxc3 23 Nxc3! gxc3 24 Qxc3 Kf8 25 Qh6+ Ke8 26 Qxh7 Qxc3+ 27 Kb1 e5 28 bxc3) 23 Nf5 Rxf5 24 exf5 Qxf5 (24 ... Bxf5?? 25 Rxf5 gxf5 26 Qg5+ Kf8 27 Rc8+) leads to similar positions with an unusual balance of forces, making it hard to give a categorical evaluation. Although, of course, it is better to be playing White.

Neither Karpov nor Botvinnik even mentions 19 ... Be6!?, a very natural way of defending: 20 g5 Nh5 21 Ng3 Qe5! 22 Nxc3 gxc3 23 Qxc3 Qg7! Here 24 f4 suggests itself, but 24 ... d5! 25 Rhd1! Qf8! 26 exd5 Bf5 promises Black counterplay (for example, 27 Rd4 Rxc3! 28 bxc3 Rxc3 29 R1d2 Qc8 30 Qe2 Qc5).

20 g5!

'After thinking for 18 minutes in search of a refutation of 19 ... R4c5, I found a fine forcing combination.' (Karpov)

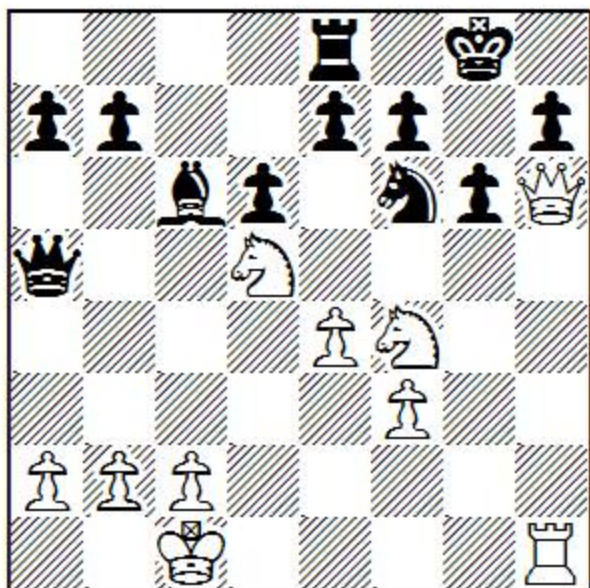
20 ... Rxc3

20 ... Nh5 also loses in view of 21 Nf4! Rxc3 (21 ... Rxc3 22 Rd5! Rxd5 23 Nxc3 Qc5 24 Nxe7+ Kh8 25 Nxc8) 22 Rxc3 Rxc3 23 Nxc3!

gxf5 24 Qxf5 Kf8 25 Qh6+ Ke8 26 Qxf7 Be6 27 Qh8+ Kd7 28 Qxc3.

21 Rd5! Rxd5 22 Nxd5 Re8 23 Nef4 Bc6

'Otherwise Nxf6+ and Nd5 with mate. If 23 ... Be6 I had prepared 24 Nxe6 fxe6 25 Nxf6+ exf6 26 Qxf7+ Kf8 27 Qxb7 Qg5+ 28 Kb1 Re7 29 Qb8+ Re8 30 Qxa7 (but not 30 Rh8+?? Kg7, and in view of the threat of ... Qg1 mate it is Black who wins) 30 ... Re7 31 Qb8+ Re8 32 Qxd6+. A rare and distinctive type of "windmill"!' (Karpov). True, 28 Kd1! is simpler.



24 e5!

Cutting off the black queen's path to the kingside. 'The attacking mechanism demonstrated by Karpov, with the main blows being landed on the 5th rank, occurs here for the first time and creates a highly artistic impression.' (Petrosian). White fails to win by 24 Nxf6+ exf6 25 Nh5 Qg5+! 26 Qxg5 fxe5 27 Nf6+ Kg7 28 Nxe8+ Bxe8 (Karpov) 29 Rd1 f5 30 Rxd6 Bc6.

24 ... Bxd5 25 exf6 exf6 26 Qxf7+ (of course, not 26 Nh5?? Re1+) 26 ... Kf8 27 Qh8+ 1-0

Black resigned in view of 27 ... Ke7 28 Nxd5+ Qxd5 29 Re1+.

Then, after three draws, Karpov also won the 6th game: on this occasion Korchnoi answered with the exotic for him 1 ... e5 2 Nf3 Nf6 and quickly ended up in a difficult position. After this he finally switched to the well-tested French Defence and did not lose again with Black,

displaying remarkable willpower and tenacity. Beginning with the 7th game, there followed a series of nine successive draws! In the 13th, the most exciting and hard-fought, Karpov played recklessly for a win in a time scramble and was nearly made to pay for it. After missing a win on the 34th move, during the resumption Korchnoi tried for a long time to make something of his remaining advantage, and created a dangerous passed a-pawn, but Karpov defended excellently and gained a draw on the 97th move.

In the opening of the 17th game (a Catalan) Korchnoi gained an obvious advantage, but he delayed somewhere and in search of ways to strengthen his position he ended up in severe time-trouble. On the 30th move he made a crude oversight, lost material, and was forced to resign immediately after the time control. The score became 3-0 in Karpov's favour, or, counting by the old regulations, 10-7.

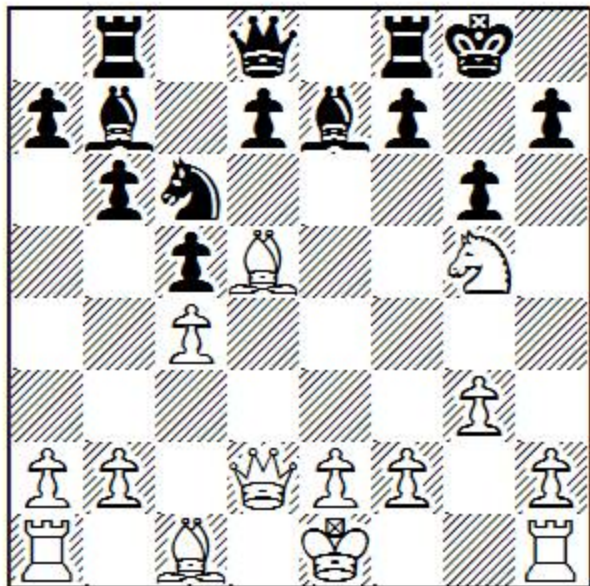
And Anatoly decided that the matter was settled: 'After this the match should have finished somewhere around the 20th game ... Why didn't this happen? It was all because of the "seditious" thought: the match is decided, so why are any additional efforts needed; all I have to do is turn up and sign the score-sheets of the last few games ...' But years later he admitted: 'I decided that it was time to remember about Fischer, that for the battle with him I had to preserve both strength, and ideas. Confidence developed into assurance: I already felt that I was the winner.'

The result of this premature relaxation was two losses – in the 19th and 21st games, which sharply aggravated the match situation. Before this Karpov had never suffered more than two defeats in any competition – what would happen now?

Precisely during those days I was passing through Moscow – returning home from a session of the Botvinnik School. I remember how Mikhail Moiseevich commented on the games from the match, appearing at the Scientists' Club in Dubna (before that, at the February session, he had covered the Karpov-Polugayevsky match in the same way, and all these commentaries formed the basis of his future book *Anatoly Karpov: His Road to the World Championship*). And I was fortunate enough to see the 21st game live: I was taken to it by my trainer Alexander Nikitin.

For the first time in my life I experienced the amazing match atmosphere – the reverential silence in the auditorium, occasionally broken by rumbles of admiration or disappointment, and the seething of

the press centre, where Nikitin took me 'to observe the thinking of the titans'. Then he took me into the auditorium and left. Glancing at the enormous demonstration board, I was stupefied.



With the aid of a long pole, the demonstrator had just reproduced Karpov's move 12 ... **Rb8?** on the board. What on earth?! I don't understand: White has the winning stroke 13 **Nxh7!** While Korchnoi was thinking over his reply, Nikitin came back. I whispered to him: 'Knight h7!' And he merely replied: 'Yes ...' Obviously others had also noticed this move: the audience became noticeably animated.

Indeed, after 13 **Nxh7! Re8** (alas, 13 ... **Kxh7** 14 **Qh6+ Kg8** 15 **Qxg6+** leads to unavoidable mate) 14 **Qh6 Ne5** 15 **Ng5 Bxg5** 16 **Bxg5 Qxg5** 17 **Qxg5 Bxd5** 18 **0-0 Bxc4** 19 **f4** Black resigned. It was a pity, of course, that the game concluded so quickly and I did not see a genuine battle ... Even so, this was my first encounter with big-time chess, and as an 11-year-old boy, it left an indelible impression on me.

It need hardly be said how anxious the Soviet sports officials became, having pinned their hopes on Karpov, when three games before the finish the match score became 3-2. According to an eyewitness, immediately after the catastrophic 21st game Baturinsky, the head of the chess section of the USSR Sports Committee, went up to Anatoly and suggested that he should urgently discuss the situation in the event of a drawn match, but Karpov forcefully replied: 'I am leading

and I do not intend to draw the match!' I should remind you that, according to the regulations, in the event of a drawn match everything would be decided by a drawing of lots. And, as has already been mentioned in Volume 2, the Sports Committee officials tried at that time to persuade the FIDE President Euwe, who had arrived in Moscow, to change the regulations ... Fortunately for chess, Euwe stood his ground.

Karpov also stood his ground, making three draws, although it was not easy for him to endure such an absurd and brutal rout. It transpires that earlier, after the 5th game, in which the same opening variation occurred, Petrosian had advised him not to play it any more, but Anatoly had forgotten his advice ... 'One has to give Petrosian his due: his sense of danger was phenomenal.'

The 23rd game, his last with Black, presented a particular difficulty: how to gain a draw? Here Botvinnik gave him some good advice, reminding him of a variation of the Queen's Indian Defence from the 21st game of the Euwe-Alekhine return match (1937). 'If Alekhine played this, it means that it's not bad,' said Botvinnik. And indeed, Karpov confidently gained a draw.

And the concluding, 24th game resembled the last, 30th game of the Alekhine-Euwe match (1935). In a difficult position, a pawn down, realising that he had no chances of success, Korchnoi (following Alekhine's example) offered a draw. And Karpov immediately accepted, since this signified his victory in the match: 3-2 with 19 draws, or $12\frac{1}{2}$ - $11\frac{1}{2}$ under the old system.

'I think that I should have won this match by a bigger margin,' the winner stated. 'Because I myself know that at some point I relaxed, at some point I played worse than I could have done.' And the loser, despite a provocative interview, which had serious consequences for him (cf. p.79), admitted: 'I felt extremely tired, so that in the last three games I was unable to give my opponent a genuine fight.'

A few months later it transpired that effectively this had been a match for the world championship. But the paradox of the 1974 cycle is that, in the creative sense, the function of a match for the world championship was fulfilled by the semi-final encounter between Karpov and Spassky, which had an enormous influence on the further development of chess. It is for this reason that I have given an almost complete commentary on it, whereas from the final match I have given only one game, the most vivid – although, as Petrosian said, 'such a game can serve as the creative rehabilitation of an entire match.' But

the splendid pinnacle of the Karpov-Korchnoi confrontation was to be the match in Baguio four years later ...

Spassky: 'This was Anatoly Karpov's cycle. All his matches – against Polugayevsky, against me, and against Korchnoi – he won well. At the given moment Karpov is objectively without doubt the strongest player. In its duration the final Candidates match was equivalent to previous matches for the world championship. Karpov's play was, so to speak, technically powerful; he did not fully disclose his creative potential. Such a strategic plan appears to me to have been the correct one. It has to be borne in mind that it was Karpov who was the first to endure the increased strain of the new regulations for selecting the challenger.'

Tal: 'In the cycle of Candidates matches the future winner performed as though in three roles: with Polugayevsky this was, despite his youth, a mature psychologist, capable of subtly exploiting the human weaknesses in his opponent's character; with Spassky – a genuinely inspired player, equally formidable in attack and tenacious in defence; with Korchnoi – not a boy, but a man, able to endure an encounter unparalleled in its competitive intensity. Karpov is all the time progressing and is still far from his peak. I have no doubt that by the time of his match with Fischer he will be even stronger.'

'In the final the battle was different in character to the match with Spassky. On this occasion Karpov played more prudently, avoiding risk as far as possible. He already sensed his strength, and he had to win the match, and that was all!' wrote Botvinnik in April 1975, and he pointed out the 23-year-old grandmaster's three vulnerable points, on the elimination of which he still had to work: inadequate physical condition, non-indifference to praise (it was supposedly because of this that after his third win he 'lost his respect for his opponent and his sense of danger – and the strongest feature of Karpov's competitive strength disappeared'), and comparatively modest opening arsenal. But he concludes his diagnosis with these words: 'Anatoly Karpov is undoubtedly the strongest chess fighter of our time.'

Euwe: 'The final Candidates match was a difficult, exhausting struggle, and was interesting in the sense of being a psychological duel between two very evenly-matched opponents.' At the closing of the match the FIDE President was asked what would happen if Fischer did not accept the challenger's challenge by the expiry of the established date. Euwe replied: 'If by 1 April 1975 Fischer does not inform me that

he is accepting the challenge, I will fly to Moscow to proclaim Karpov the 12th world champion.'

But there was still some possibility that the match with Fischer would take place, and the USSR Sports Committee did everything possible to ensure that Karpov prepared thoroughly. Early in 1975 several training sessions were held with the participation of the country's best chess experts. Of considerable interest are the memoirs of an eye-witness to these events, Yuri Razuvaev, which are published here for the first time:

'A year earlier, before his match with Polugayevsky, Anatoly was lazy about working – he preferred to mess about with stamps, play cards and billiards, or pass the time playing blitz (here he was fearfully strong: he would crush everyone in turn, even Tal). Apparently he had not yet got used to the cycle. He was a genuine natural talent: in his childhood he studied Capablanca's games – and he began playing. He was a purely practical player, a competitor! Well, of course, then Furman did a great deal for him ... But when Anatoly started working, he worked very well: he actively participated in the analysis and made a mass of discoveries. Moreover, it was always important for him that someone was "playing" against him. Once every hour or so he would change colour, and "play" the same position with both White and with Black: he was as though training his playing skills. It was essential for him constantly to feel resistance – then he would be turned on and find the "guiding thread". I was staggered at how "omnivorous" he was: he would play all the standard positions equally well with both colours. Apparently it was here that his unique feeling for position was displayed. I have seen many world champions, but this was unusual.

'Of course, Geller's influence cannot be discounted, but another player who had a great influence on Karpov was Tal. For some reason it is customary to say of Tal only that "he calculated variations like a computer", and few mention his unique understanding of chess, his ability instantly to evaluate a position. Such depth is something that I have not seen in anyone! Of course, Geller was a fantastically deep player, but Tal had a more subtle feeling for position. He played modern, ultra-dynamic chess. Thanks to his evaluating ability he would very quickly grasp the essence of the problem and decide on the direction of work in any highly complicated position. In this sense he was completely unique! True, in his searchings Tal was rather lazy and

he would usually suggest: “We’d do better to play his position in a blitz game!”

‘At a training session in a sanatorium on the outskirts of Leningrad there were three of us: Tal, Karpov and I. And when they sat down to “play a position” at blitz, Tal would begin literally to gush forth with ideas. And I in astonishment would sit alongside and record them in a thick notebook ...

‘How did the preparations go for the battle with Fischer? Firstly, since there was a lengthy match in prospect, Karpov needed a very wide choice of openings: after all, over such a distance they would sooner or later be “breached”. Therefore against 1 e4 we prepared, apart from 1 ... e5 and 1 ... c6, the Sicilian Defence – the Paulsen Variation and the Scheveningen. At that time in the Caro-Kann Anatoly preferred 4 ... Bf5, which was successfully tried in the match with Spassky. I was about to suggest “my” move 4 ... Nd7, but Tolya sceptically replied: ‘Well, only as a last resort.’ It is amusing that years later this variation became Karpov’s main weapon for Black!

‘Secondly, we shared Geller’s opinion that Fischer played the opening very riskily, employing very sharp and sometimes strategically dubious variations. Therefore, strangely enough, the opening was his weakest, most vulnerable point. Not without reason did Lasker say: “In chess Black must first of all defend, otherwise the game turns into a farce.” Since in double-edged variations the role of any preparation increases many-fold: here the outcome of a game can be decided literally by one move. And we endeavoured to devise as many such preparations as possible – underwater mines, especially for White.

‘Thus, against the Najdorf Variation in the Sicilian Defence a deep study was made of the variations with 6 Bg5 – both before the match with Polugayevsky and later, a weighty contribution was made by Geller and Tal. Against the Alekhine Defence, which Fischer played in his match with Spassky, Anatoly was armed “to the teeth” even earlier. When, at the finish of the Interzonal tournament, Korchnoi suggested to him that they should both agree draws, he was indignant: no way, “my” Torre plays the Alekhine Defence – this is a ready-made point! ...

‘In addition, before his match with Spassky I convinced Anatoly that he should “serve from both sides”, and this produced an excellent effect. After all, in Reykjavik Fischer too had successfully played many openings (although here I agree with Bondarevsky – out of fear!). Why not operate in the same way against Fischer himself? I remember

Furman complaining to me: “Some ‘patzer’ taught Tolya to play 1 e4, and now you and I are suffering as a result!” Furman and I played 1 d4, and for Karpov too this move was fully in keeping with his style. In short, we continued working on 1 d4. From Fischer one could mainly expect the King’s Indian Defence, the Grünfeld and the Modern Benoni – very thorough preparations were made for these openings, and even training games were played.

‘When it transpired that Fischer was not going to play, Furman shrugged his shoulders: ‘All these openings for Black are no good – and he decided to give up.’ Indeed, soon doubts were cast on much of Fischer’s repertoire. It is a pity that this happened not in a direct encounter, which could have given a gigantic impetus to the development of opening theory. We thought that in such matches one should try and breach the opponent’s defences in the main variations, by choosing the most critical lines. And this course, incidentally, prevailed in subsequent matches for the world championship, and later it was also taken up by Kasparov.

‘This great amount of work helped Tolya subsequently: he began winning all the tournaments! As they say, the shell missed its target. But for Karpov’s chess development it was bad that he did not play the match with Fischer. It was the misfortune of the great player: he quickly realised that, to defeat the rest, he did not need anything more – and he practically stopped working. In Baguio he largely relied on his old knowledge. And as a result, after losing his best years, he did not fully realise his creative potential. Fischer realised his completely, but Karpov nevertheless fell short.’

Bondarevsky could not come to these sessions, but he and Polugayevsky presented Karpov with detailed written descriptions of the American champion (these interesting studies were recently published in the book *Russians versus Fischer*). The reminiscences of Igor Zaitsev, published here for the first time, are also very interesting:

‘At the very start of April 1975 I was suddenly (most probably, through the approach of Tigran Petrosian) invited to Novogorsk to a training session with Anatoly Karpov, for consultation on certain theoretical questions. Here, as I imagined, the preparations for the match with Fischer should have been at fever pitch. But it was very much a holiday atmosphere that reigned at the training session. Karpov and Petrosian were keenly contesting a game of billiards, and Furman, bantering with them in turn, was phlegmatically watching the game.

Within some forty minutes the battle on the green baize concluded and we went off for a substantial dinner. This training scenario was one that I was already well familiar with, from my long years of association with Petrosian. Both Karpov and Petrosian always preferred live chess contact to exhausting analysis. Roughly an hour and a half after dinner Anatoly and I finally went off to his room and sat down at a chessboard.

‘Well, what could I show him in a hurry about the genius Fischer? I remember that I tried to interest him in a new defence, which at the end of the 1960s I had devised in the Spanish Exchange Variation: 1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bb5 a6 4 Bxc6 dxc6 5 0-0 Ne7!? (after my publications in 64 it was successfully employed by Keres), but since in the main line 6 Nxe5 Qd4 7 Qh5 g6 8 Qg5 Bg7 9 Nd3 Black had to go in for unclear play a pawn down by 9 ... f5, it did not arouse any particular enthusiasm in Karpov. Some other interesting ideas, relating to the Spanish Open Variation, were received more favourably by him. However, he also did not want to devote much attention to them: after all, the probability that Fischer would suddenly prefer a specific variation of the Ruy Lopez to the Sicilian was ridiculously small. And Karpov, who by nature was purposeful and very organised, never wasted his time.

‘During our first chess rendezvous he was constantly being called to the only telephone, which was on the ground floor of the building: it was at this time that the situation regarding the world championship was finally being settled – Fischer had not accepted the challenge. And it so happened that my theoretical reviews began with the challenger, and effectively concluded with the world champion.

‘It is hard to say who would have won their match. I have heard several times from Karpov himself that in that year Fischer’s chances were slightly better. But before the start of the Candidates matches Karpov had modestly said: “This is not my cycle.” It seems to me that a new qualitative leap could well have been expected of him.

‘In all his triumphal matches, from virtually the very first games Fischer was able, in some inexplicable way, to sow doubts in the hearts of his experienced opponents and gain a psychological advantage over them. Where the opponent was less compliant, like, for example, the uncompromising Reshevsky, the battle was far tougher. In the first half of his match with Fischer, Petrosian also looked like a worthy opponent. But as soon as Petrosian cracked and he lost his mental balance, Fischer became transformed and began playing with redoubled energy. As some professional psychologists assert, in an encounter between

two individuals the aggregate measure of confidence is a constant: that which one loses is gained by the other.

‘It is extremely improbable that such a psychological weakening could have occurred with Karpov. This is confirmed by the whole of his exceptionally stable career. True, that same career suggests that Fischer could have proved more durable, if the match had been excessively prolonged. Karpov would have had to pay very serious attention to his overall physical preparation. We must not forget that he was eight years younger than the champion and, according to the statistics of world championship matches, overall success is nevertheless on the side of the young.

‘Comparing their chess virtues is even more difficult. In my opinion, by 1975 Karpov’s positional intuition was stronger, but Fischer’s combinative vision was wider in scope. Karpov was more tenacious in defence – Fischer was more resolute in attack. There was also a slight difference in how they converted an advantage: there, where Karpov acted more methodically, Fischer would achieve his aim more energetically.

‘Fischer would probably have had a more detailed impression of “his” set-ups, but since his opening repertoire was rather narrow, Karpov could have probed for vulnerable places in it, also by relying on the united support of the “home producers” of theory. To a narrow circle of acquaintances Petrosian said several times that the only reason why Fischer left chess was because almost all of his opening variations had already been refuted. This is possibly an exaggeration, but many weak points in Fischer’s favourite lines were indeed already well marked.

‘I will try to guess the specific nature of their opening confrontation. Fischer would have been unlikely to deviate from his customary 1 e4, since he would have seen that in the closed games Karpov adopted exceptionally solid and reliable set-ups. But how would Karpov have repelled 1 e4 ? Probably in an uncomfortably diverse way for his opponent, relying simultaneously on the Ruy Lopez, Petroff, Caro-Kann and even Sicilian. Karpov could handle the Ruy Lopez both traditionally, and by selecting one of the specific variations. He could have been helped by the fact that at that time, in order to avoid either the Marshall Attack or the Open Variation, Fischer often replied to 3 ... a6 with 4 Bxc6.

‘With White, in contrast to his opponent, Karpov could have alternated between 1 e4 and 1 d4 far more freely. 1 e4 would have

usually led to variations of the Sicilian, while after 1 d4 Fischer could have been mainly expected to choose the King's Indian Defence. It would appear that over a long match Karpov's chances in the opening would have been, at the least, not worse.

'In the transition stage from opening to middlegame, in the solving of strategic problems I would give some preference to Fischer at that time, bearing in mind his greater knowledge and experience. However, I do not see on which scales it is possible to measure and compare such dissimilar factors, that Karpov was a young, rapidly developing and highly trained player, while Fischer, practising a strict self-denial tournament diet and concocting opening variations alone, was an exceptionally deep and subtle researcher.

'At any event, for me it is evident that they were opponents who were worthy of each other. Both of them hardly ever made serious mistakes, they lost extremely rarely and in the eyes of their contemporaries they appeared to be almost infallible players.'

In the previous volume I have already expressed my opinion about why Fischer refused to play Karpov. Now, when in general terms we are familiar with the work of the Karpov team, I should like to explain more clearly my vision of the situation that had arisen by that time in world chess.

In my view, when Furman and Petrosian explained Fischer's withdrawal by the fact that nearly all of his opening variations were already 'no good' or had been 'refuted', this was an obvious exaggeration – the maximalism typical of chess experts of the old school, accustomed to thinking in general categories. True, they hit on the correct explanation, but they expressed their idea inaccurately. It is hard to understand: which variations, strictly speaking, had been refuted? The very sharp 'Najdorf' is still holding out to this day, as are Fischer's defences to 1 d4. And is it possible in general to talk about the refutation of entire opening variations? Besides, by 1975 a number of new and quite attractive set-ups had appeared on the horizon (among them such incorrect, from the classical point of view, variations as the Chelyabinsk or the 'Hedgehog'), some of which Fischer could well have adopted.

Therefore it would have been more correct to talk not about the refutation of specific opening variations, but about the new approach to opening preparation in general. This was the crux of the problem! With his enormous work in the early 1970s Fischer prepared a qualitative

leap in the development of opening theory – he was the proclaimer of a genuine openings revolution, which began precisely in his ‘golden’ year 1972 and within a little more than ten years logically led the progress of chess thinking to my matches with Karpov.

To some, these post-Fischer years may seem rather uninteresting, but in chess there was a colossal amount of underground work going on. Fischer’s departure and the politicisation of chess life somewhat diverted attention from the creative aspect, which prevented the role of this period in chess development from being properly appreciated (it is for this reason that I have covered Karpov’s most important matches in such detail). Although, in fact, in opening theory truly revolutionary changes were taking place. This topic has proved so fascinating and immense, that have I decided to devote a separate volume to it, the next in the series.

So what in fact was Fischer’s key problem? In my view it was that, always working alone, he was simply unable to adapt to the new demands of preparation, dictated by the opening revolution. The complexity of the resulting problems demanded other methods of working, another way of thinking and, which was especially important, the presence of critics. And, hypothetically comparing the pre-match preparations of Fischer and Karpov, one must mention not only the challenger’s advantage in the number and quality of specific prepared variations, but also, in particular, his obvious superiority in the all-inclusive, wide-ranging extent of this preparation.

It is quite probable that Fischer, with his keen chess feeling, even before the Karpov-Spassky match clearly realised: a new era had arrived and he had to reject his customary methods of working. With his own eyes he saw the fruits of the revolution he had generated, and he was aware that it was no longer possible to prepare properly on his own. Invite some helpers? But he had always worked alone, not trusting his helpers even to analyse adjourned positions! He was aware that serious qualitative shifts had occurred, that he had left one kind of chess and would arrive at another, and that to join the new reality, a huge effort, an incredible spurt was required.

He realised that he would have to play against the leader of a generation who had grown up on the wave of the openings revolution and had brought these qualitative shifts to chess. Against a cold-blooded fighter, who would not only learn the lessons of his matches with Polugayevsky, Spassky and Korchnoi, and not only use the

analyses of the leading Soviet grandmasters, but also display his unique ability to instantly absorb, digest, and successfully put into practice any sound strategic ideas.

Observing the qualifying cycle, he realised that Karpov would be especially strong in the first part of the marathon. And Bobby, in view of his psychological instability, most probably began to have serious fears about a bad start. However, these fears too largely rested on the quality of opening preparation. Fischer sensed that in an encounter with Karpov his preparation might not meet the demands of the moment. Torn apart by numerous complexes, he ended up in a vicious circle: afraid that you will be unable to prepare properly, because of this you become even more afraid ...

In short, Fischer was not in fact able to change track, also for the reason that he had not played chess for too long. In the Botvinnik era it was possible not to play for three years and still retain the title of world champion, whereas in the times of the openings revolution three years was a whole eternity! In modern chess history, champions and challengers have managed to switch to a different era, but only through being active players. The most titanic work was done in the 1970s by Korchnoi, although Karpov's determined rebuilding in the mid-1980s (to be described later) was also impressive. I too, although not to the same degree, had to rebuild my game after the defeat in my match with Kramnik ...

But let us return to the spring of 1975: on 3rd April FIDE proclaimed Karpov the 12th world champion in the history of chess. And on 24th April in Moscow, in the Hall of Columns of the House of Unions, the coronation ceremony of the new chess king took place. In his speech Dr Euwe said, among other things:

'I admire Karpov's composure, his deep sense of respect and the competitive qualities which he has displayed throughout the time that this matter has lasted (since the match regulations were drawn up). Fischer had every opportunity to defend his title. Fischer's obstinacy, or some other features of his character which I, like many others, do not understand, prevented him from utilising his right, and from fulfilling his duty to the chess world. As regards Karpov, of this we are confident: he will be a worthy champion, and will on many occasions demonstrate his strength in various events.'

Euwe recalled, not without some pride, that the first of Karpov's three thousand moves on the path to the throne was made by him – at

the Niemeijer Cup in Groningen (cf. p.209), and he concluded: 'So it was following my example that Anatoly Karpov became world champion!'

'I don't know about Fischer, but I consider the match that we didn't play to be an enormous loss,' Karpov was to say years later. 'It is not worth guessing how it would have concluded, but I don't doubt for an instant that it would have become the most significant event in my life ... Of course, I was happy when Max Euwe crowned me with the laurel wreath of world champion. But in that wreath there were not the most important leaves, there was not the most valuable thing for me – memorable signs of a struggle with my brilliant predecessor.'

Active Champion

After gaining the title without a match, Karpov rushed into the crucible of tournament battles, driven by a desire to demonstrate that he did indeed have no equals in the world. He immediately outlined his credo at the coronation ceremony: 'It seems to me that one of the chief obligations of the world champion is to be an active player, so that people from various countries should see the champion at the chessboard, and that grandmasters and masters should be able to measure their strength against his, learn from him and teach him something. Therefore I firmly intend to take part systematically in home and international events.'

His 'debut' as champion came at the Vidmar Memorial (Portoroz/Ljubljana, June 1975): 1. Karpov – 11 out of 15 (+7=8); 2. Gligoric – 10; 3-5. Furman, Hort and Ribli – 9½; 6-7. Parma and Portisch – 8½; 8-9. Ljubojevic and Velimirovic – 8, etc. It is noteworthy that in his first-round game with Portisch he chose not his favourite move 1 e4, but 1 Nf3 – and scored a good win in the Slav Defence (revenge for San Antonio!). From that time onwards 'serving from both sides', which had been successfully tested in his match with Spassky and prepared against Fischer, was regularly employed by Karpov, although before the matches with me he nevertheless had a clear leaning towards 1 e4.

Then came the USSR Team Championship (Riga, July 1975), where there was a very strong tournament on the top boards: Karpov, Spassky, Petrosian, Tal, Beliavsky ... Anatoly confidently made the best score (+4=3), again defeating Spassky with the help of 1 d4 – this time

it was a Queen's Indian Defence with the successful siege of an isolated d5-pawn.

The champion's next test was a super-tournament in Milan (August-September 1975), a city which had been in contention for the staging of the Fischer-Karpov match and had decided to replace it with another outstanding chess event. The competition was held under an unusual formula – in three stages: first an all-play-all tournament of 12 grandmasters, then semi-final matches of four games between the players who had taken the first four places (1-4 and 2-3) and a final match of six games.

Karpov: 'Here I was simply obliged to be first! The tournament had a grandiose line-up – it was as though it had been devised to test the calibre of the new champion. The world still demanded proof of the legality of the "new regime". Milan would have to put the dot over the "i". First of all I had to finish in the first four ... When it is a question of the need to be first, after playing 21 games in 25 days against very strong opponents, the creative aspect has to take second place.'

After winning three 'Spanish duels' in the first six rounds – with Black against Ljubojevic (deep into the endgame – in a drawn ending with opposite-coloured bishops) and with White against Unzicker and Gligoric, he took the lead. And he could have finished first, had he not lost in the 8th round with White against Andersson. It is symptomatic that Ulf beat Karpov – and before that also Portisch! – with his favourite 'hedgehog' system, which was then only just gathering speed (in the volume about the openings revolution, a whole chapter will be devoted to this flexible set-up). Karpov liked playing against the 'hedgehog' and he was thinking only about victory: 'Andersson regularly runs short of time, and I played specially so as to give him food for thought.' A complicated manoeuvring struggle developed, and Ulf did indeed end up in terrible time-trouble, but when he played ... d6-d5 and made a desperate exchange sacrifice, miracles began: Anatoly made a series of 'obvious' moves and ... adjourned the game in a lost position.

However, he did not lose his place in the first four and after a bloodless semi-final with Petrosian (2-2, victory on the superior coefficient in the tournament) he won the final match against Portisch: 3½-2½. The outcome of the entire event was decided by Karpov's only win, and again with White in a Ruy Lopez – in the Steinitz Defence Deferred. More details of this difficult match are given in the chapter 'The Hungarian Botvinnik' (cf. *Volume 3, Game No.40*). Tal: 'Not long

before the tournament Karpov was indisposed and he played in Italy without his usual verve. In my view, one of the most graphic manifestations of a player's class is his ability to perform successfully even when he is "off" his game. It was this that the champion demonstrated in Milan.'

In November Karpov gave some intensive simultaneous displays in a tournament of Pioneers Palaces, held in Leningrad (where, as has already been mentioned, we first met at the board). A couple of weeks later the 43rd USSR Championship was starting, and all the leading players in the country were due to take part: from 1973, after the loss of the crown, the Sports Committee rigorously endeavoured to follow this line. Of course, Karpov too was due to play there, but he had to withdraw on account of fatigue and his poor state of health, which was supported by an official medical report.

Unhappy about this news, the head of the chess section Baturinsky wrote a report to Ivonin, the deputy chairman of the Sports Committee: *'I would ask you to speak personally to A.E.Karpov, and if necessary to the medical officials, in view of the fact that the world champion's non-participation in the national championship, following the refusal of Korchnoi and Spassky for the second year running, will have unfavourable repercussions.'* But the Leningrad doctors managed to convince the sports directors ... It was Petrosian who became national champion, half a point ahead of Vaganian, Gulko, Romanishin and Tal.

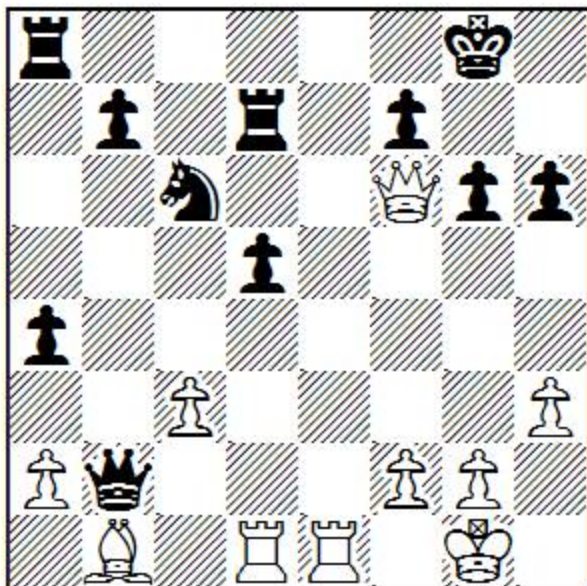
Thoroughly rested and restored, Karpov set off together with his long-standing friend and rival Rafael Vaganian to the highly prestigious 'Solidarity' tournament in Skopje (February-March 1976), where four years earlier he had made a brilliant debut at the Olympiad.

The pairings brought the rivals together in the very first round, and again, as three years earlier in Budapest, Vaganian was unable to hold out in his favourite French Defence.

Game 68

A.Karpov-R.Vaganian

Skopje 1976, 1st round



23 Bf5! (it was for the sake of this that White gave up his b2-pawn) **23 ... Re7?**

In Karpov's opinion, '23 ... gxf5 would also have lost to 24 Rd3 f4 25 Qxf4 Qc2 26 Rg3+ Kh7 27 Qf6' (or 27 Qg4), but '25 ... f6 was perhaps more tenacious.'

In the computer era it can be said with far more certainty: 23 ... gxf5! 24 Rd3 f4 25 Qxf4 f6! followed by ... Rg7 would have enabled Black to save the game: 26 Rg3+ (26 Ree3 Rg7! is weaker) 26 ... Rg7 27 Qxf6 Rxc3 28 fxc3 Qb6+ 29 Kh2 Qc7, or 26 Qxf6 Rg7 27 Qe6+ Kh7 28 Qf5+ Kh8 with a draw.

24 Rxe7 Nxe7 25 Bd3! Nf5

A difficult choice: in the event of 25 ... Kf8 (25 ... Nc6? 26 Bxc6, while if 25 ... Re8? or 25 ... Qa3?, then 26 Re1 is decisive) 26 Rb1 Qd2! (but not Karpov's move 26 ... Qxa2?) 27 Rxb7 Qe1+ 28 Kh2 Qe6 29 Qh8+ Ng8 30 Qd4 Black's position is also unenviable.

26 Bxf5 gxf5 27 Re1 Qxa2 28 Qxh6!

After 28 Re3 Black would have saved himself with the pretty 28 ... f4! 29 Qxf4 Qb1+ 30 Kh2 a3! 31 Rg3+ Qg6 32 Rxc6+ fxc6, 'and White has no more than perpetual check' (Karpov). For the same reason Re3 does not win on the 29th and 31st moves.

28 ... a3 29 Qg5+ Kf8 30 Qf6 Kg8 31 Qxf5 Qd2? (31 ... Kg7, intending ... d5-d4, was still not so clear) 32 Re7!, and Black resigned on the 40th move.

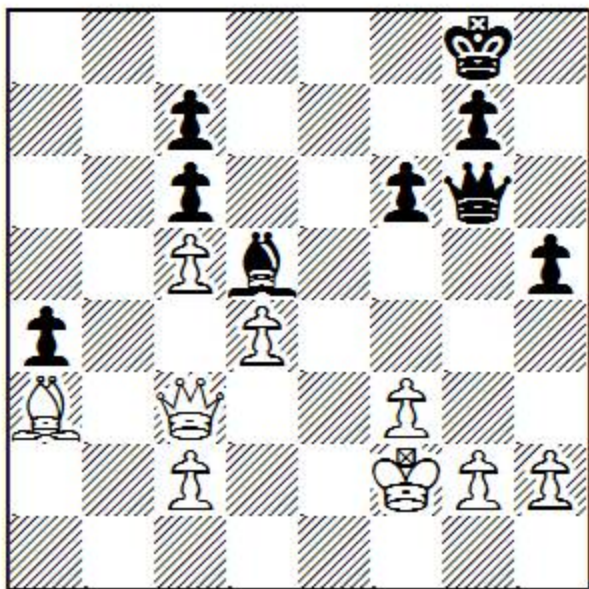
After this defeat Rafael obviously felt disheartened, and was no longer in contention for the prize places. One can't help remembering Korchnoi's words: 'Vaganian is a chess player of enormous practical potential. But he is more of an artist than a fighter. And he needs inspiration, in order to demonstrate his class. And it, inspiration, is a capricious thing.'

But Karpov, although he expended a mass of energy on this first-round win, managed after a draw with Black against Adorjan (note the opening: 1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 e6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 a6 5 Bd3 Qc7 6 0-0 g6 etc.) to win a further four games in a row! One of them reached an endgame with opposite-coloured bishops, far more refined than the one in his Milan game with Ljubojevic.

Game 69

B.Kurajica-A.Karpov

Skopje 1976, 5th round

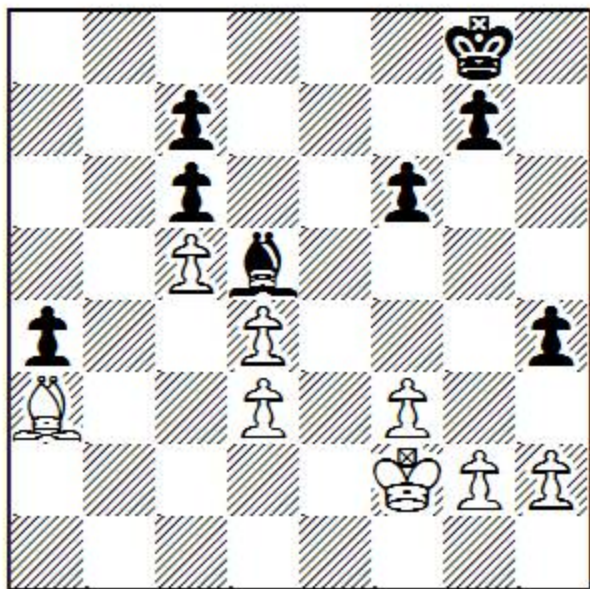


Black's advantage is largely of an academic nature. It is hard to imagine that anything real can be derived from it.

32 Qd3

Kurajica offers the exchange of queens, believing that there are no dangers in this opposite-coloured bishop ending. 32 h4 (Karpov) 32 ... Qf5 33 Qd3 was slightly more circumspect, but it is hard to criticise seriously the move made: White retained a draw for a long time in the endgame.

32 ... Qxd3 33 cxd3 h4!



Slightly pinning down White's kingside pawns and preparing a potential breakthrough. Without the creation of another weakness or another passed pawn, the ending with opposite-coloured bishops cannot be won!

34 g3 Kf7 35 Ke3 f5 36 Kf4 Kg6 37 Ke3?!

Passive. The simplest way to draw was 37 gxh4, reducing the number of black pawns: 37 ... Kh5 38 Kxf5 (38 Kg3 will probably also do, but why make things unnecessarily complicated!) 38 ... Bxf3, and now, of course, not 39 Bb2? Bd5! 40 Bc1 in view of 40 ... Kxh4 (Karpov considers only 40 ... Bf7? 41 Bb2 Kxh4 42 d5! with a draw) 41 Kg6 Kh3 42 Kxg7 Kxh2 43 Kf6 Kg3 44 Ke7 Kf3 45 Kd7 Ke2 46 Kxc7 Kxd3 when Black wins, but 39 Kf4 Be2 40 Kg3 with a drawn position.

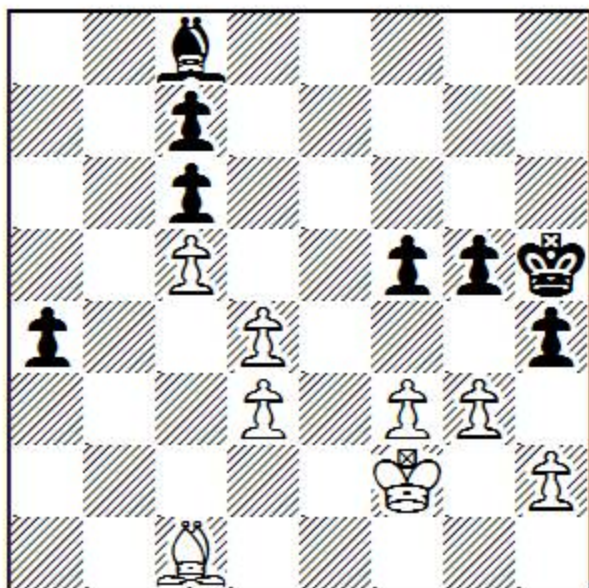
37 g4 too is sufficient for a draw, also denying the opponent the possibility of breaking through on the kingside. After 37 ... Be6 38 Bb2 fxg4 39 fxg4 Bb3 40 g5 Bc2 White gives up his d3-pawn and moves his bishop between the squares c1-b2-a3, while if ... Kf7, then Ke5.

Of course, 37 Ke3 also does not lose, but this is a 'moral' victory for Black: he seizes space on the kingside and White begins to have difficulties in defending.

37 ... Kh5 38 Bb4 g5

'Here it is, the real threat of a breakthrough – 39 ... f4+ 40 gxf4 g4! 41 fxg4+ Kxg4. White has to retreat his king, still not realising where the danger lies.' (Karpov)

39 Kf2 Ba2 40 Ba3 Bb1 41 Ke2 Ba2 42 Bc1 Be6 43 Kf2 Bc8



44 d5?

'But this is nerves.' (Karpov). White does not simply give up a pawn, but, more importantly, he undoubles the c-pawns – and it is this factor that allows Black to win!

White should have continued defending passively – 44 Ke2. After 44 ... Ba6 45 Ke3 (45 Bb2? hxg3 46 hxg3 f4 favours Black – Karpov) 45 ... f4+ 46 gxf4 g4 White saves himself by 47 f5 (Karpov) 47 ... g3 48 hxg3 hxg3 49 f6 Kg6 50 f4, or 47 fxg4+ Kxg4 48 Ke4 Bc8 49 Ke5, and if 49 ... Kh3 50 f5 Bxf5 51 Kxf5 Kxh2 he has 52 d5! cxd5 53 Bf4+ Kg2 54 Bxc7, while after 49 ... Bf5 the immediate breakthrough is possible: 50 d5 cxd5 51 c6 Bxd3 52 Kxd5 Kh3 53 f5! Bxf5 54 Bf4 with a draw.

Black's best chance is the immediate 44 ... f4! 45 gxf4 g4. White should wait: 46 Kf2 Bf5 47 Ba3 Bxd3 48 Bc1 Bc4 (the bishop goes to d5, to force the capture on g4) 49 Bb2 Bd5 50 fxg4+ Kxg4 51 Bc1 Bb3

52 Kg2 Bc4 53 Kf2 Bd5. Now White has to part with a pawn because of zugzwang: 54 f5 Kxf5 55 Ke3 Kg4 56 Kf2 Kh3 57 Kg1.

Roughly the same position arose later in the game, but ... ! Here Black's pawns are doubled, and this saves White: 57 ... Bf3 58 Kf2 Bh5 59 Kg1 Bd1 60 Kh1 Kg4 61 Kg2 Kf5 62 Kh3 Ke4 63 Bb2 Kd3 64 Kxh4 Kc2 65 Ba1 a3 66 Kg5 a2 67 Kf6 Kb1 68 Bc3 a1Q 69 Bxa1 Kxa1. Black has won the bishop, but the white king is just in time to pick up all of the enemy pawns: 70 Ke7 Kb2 71 Kd7 Bf3 72 h4 Kc3 73 h5 Kxd4 74 h6 Be4 75 h7 Bxh7 76 Kxc6.

44 ... cxd5 45 d4 f4! 46 gxf4

'White's position is hopeless after 46 g4+ Kg6 followed by the king manoeuvre f7-e6-d7-c6-b5-c4 and the switching of the bishop to d3.' (Karpov). Whereas the white king is forced to defend the f3- and g4-pawns standing on light-coloured squares.

46 ... g4 47 Kg2 Bf5 48 Kf2 gxf3 49 Kxf3 Be4+ 50 Kf2 Kg4 51 Bb2 Kxf4 52 Bc1+ Kg4 53 Bb2 c6 54 Bc1 Kh3 55 Kg1 Bg6 56 Kh1 (there is nothing else) **56 ... Bh5**

Of course, not 56 ... Kg4? 57 Kg2 Kf5 58 Kf3 Bh5+ 59 Ke3 with a draw. 'At all costs the white king must be deprived of the f3-square.' (Karpov)

57 Kg1 Bd1! 0-1

White resigned in view of 58 Bb2 Kg4 59 Kg2 Bf3+! 60 Kf2 Kf4 (Karpov), or 58 Kh1 Kg4 59 Kg2 Kf5 60 Kh3 (60 Kf2 Ke4) 60 ... Ke4, and there is again a race, but here after 61 Bb2 Kd3 62 Kxh4 Kc2 63 Ba1 Kb1 64 Bc3 a3 65 Kg5 a2 66 Kf6 a1Q 67 Bxa1 Kxa1 68 Ke6 Kb2 69 Kd6 Kc3 70 Kxc6 Kxd4 Black has a decisive tempo.

'Even the seemingly most simple positions contain many secrets, and you should play equally carefully in positions with many pieces and castling on opposite sides, as in endings with opposite-coloured bishops and an equal number of pawns. Alas, often it is sufficient to make just one mistake, not even a blunder, to perhaps lose an otherwise well conducted game,' Karpov summarises. 22 years later another subtle ending with opposite-coloured bishops occurred in one of his games (*Game No.107*).

In the 7th round the only ever Reshevsky-Karpov game took place: **1 Nf3 c5 2 c4 Nf6 3 g3 g6 4 Bg2 Bg7 5 0-0 0-0 6 d4 cxd4 7 Nxd4 Nc6 8 Nc3 Nxd4 9 Qxd4 d6 10 Qd3 a6 11 Bd2 Rb8 12 Rac1 ½-½**. It is incredible, but true: during his dizzy career the 64-year-old giant of American chess played against eleven world champions! In Skopje Reshevsky made a modest score, suffering from all his usual problems.

Karpov: 'His devoutness and punctuality in observing the rites of his faith are well known throughout the chess world. His religion prevents him from playing on Friday evenings. Therefore all the participants agreed to switch their games with Reshevsky on that day of the week to the morning, so that they would finish before sunset. On the first Friday Reshevsky was due to meet Vaganian, who regarded the prospect of a morning session with excessive calm, even complete disdain. I was concerned: "Find out the exact starting time." Vaganian returned looking discouraged: "They say early – at ten." "On no account. You're accustomed to getting up late. Don't even think of agreeing to earlier than noon. Eleven is the very earliest: if your mild character can't stand it and you start giving way." And we set off together to the organisers. Reshevsky argued, and threatened to leave Skopje, but all the other players supported us. This game, which began at eleven, was conducted brilliantly by Vaganian, and he promptly rushed to the hotel to thank me ... '

It seems to me that this episode reveals Karpov's tough, uncompromising character and partly explains why some brilliant talents become champions, and others do not. Here it should also be explained that Anatoly, like many leading grandmasters, is by nature a 'night-owl', and for him it was always important for play to begin as late as possible.

The last intrigue of the tournament in Skopje was the finishing encounter between the leaders, Uhlmann and Karpov. The German grandmaster was half a point behind and, it appeared, was bound to try his luck. However, he did not achieve anything from the opening (cf. *Volume 3, Game No.71*, note to Black's 7th move) and, dissatisfied with his position, offered a draw. But Karpov again displayed his character: he turned down the peace offer and coldly converted his advantage into a win.

The final result was truly champion-like: 1. Karpov – 12½ out of 15 (+10=5); 2. Uhlmann – 11; 3. Timman – 10½; 4-5. Kurajica and Tarjan – 9; 6. Velimirovic – 8½; 7. Adorjan – 8; 8-9. Ivkov and Matanovic – 7½; 10. Vaganian – 7, etc. After the tournament Karpov proudly stated that in percentage terms he had surpassed Fischer's result in Skopje 1967 (13½ out of 17). And to the question 'Who do you consider to be your most dangerous rival?' without beating about the bush he replied: 'I don't see anyone at the moment ... '

Apparently inspired by Karpov's successes, in March 1976 the Sports Committee adopted an impressive resolution: 'On the preparation of Soviet chess players for the world championship events 1976-78.' In the preamble it was stated:

'By fulfilling the Committee's directives No.117 of 7 February 1973 and No.48 of 29 May 1974, Soviet chess players have achieved significant successes in international competitions and consolidated their leading position in the chess world. At the present time they hold all the officially contested championship titles in the world and in Europe. Grandmaster A.Karpov, after being proclaimed world champion, has performed in national and foreign competitions, and has achieved fine results and general recognition as the No.1 player in the world.'

This resolution approved a three-year 'Preparation plan for members of the USSR teams for world championship competitions of 1976-78.' I don't know to what extent it was fulfilled, but I should like to acquaint you with extracts from this once secret document – a monument to an entire era:

'Each member of the USSR team should every year play an average of 80 games in six competitions. The control event for each grandmaster, determining his playing load in the following year, is the USSR individual championship.'

The training load of a member of the USSR teams is to consist every year of four sessions, of duration totalling 70 days, and four periods of individual work, of duration totalling 70 days.

Every year in January a 24-day training session of the strongest USSR players is to be held at the Sports Committee's Olympic Base in Novogorsk. During the year training sessions lasting 12-18 days are to be held at Sports Committee bases before official FIDE events and before major international tournaments.

Each member of the USSR team is obliged to keep a diary of preparations and performances. The diary is the main report document, reflecting the quality of the player's preparation and play.

A player's state of health and general physical preparation are to be constantly monitored by the USSR chess teams' doctor. Psychological preparation is to be carried out at training and medical sessions by specialist consultants and monitored by the USSR chess teams' doctor.

Schedule for ensuring that members of the USSR teams and trainers have up-to-date chess information:

1. Study of the games of the leading foreign grandmasters (Mecking, Ljubojevic, Andersson, Hübner, Smejkal, Portisch, Hort, Larsen, Browne, Kavalek) with a critical analysis, summary of opening repertoire and recommendations.

2. Study of topical problems and writing of confidential reports 'Opening reviews for 1975 (1976, 1977)'. Completion dates – the entire period 1976-78. To be carried out by leading chess theoreticians (grandmasters and masters). Size of each work: 25-30 typed pages. Financing – by contract labour at the rate: annually 6 reports x 250 roubles = 1500 roubles.

3. Copying of material from foreign chess periodicals. Financing – annually 20,000 pages x 2½ kopecks = 500 roubles.

4. Preparation of punched cards with chess information for use with the Central Chess Club punched card index. Financing – by contract labour at the rate: annually 15,000 cards x 20 kopecks (average cost, established in 1974 during A.Karpov's preparations for match with R.Fischer) = 3000 roubles.

Annual cost of this work approximately 5000 (five thousand) roubles.

In the meantime chess life took its normal course. After the major tournament in Skopje the world champion played in three successive events, each of just six games: in April – the USSR Team Cup in Tbilisi (+2=4), and in May – a double-round tournament of four players in Amsterdam (+2=4). Karpov: 'The conclusion of this tournament coincided with my 25th birthday, and when the 75-year-old professor Euwe and I appeared on television, the Dutch joked that it was the broadcast of the century.'

In July – a similar four-player tournament in Manila (+1-1=4). In the 2nd round the champion lost unexpectedly with White to the idol of Filipino chess fans Eugenio Torre – of course, not in an Alekhine Defence, but in a double-edged variation of the Sicilian: 1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Nf6 5 Nc3 Nc6 6 Bg5 e6 7 Qd2 a6 8 0-0-0 Bd7 9 f4 b5. 'And even an excellent win over Ljubojevic could not save me from 2nd place in the event,' Karpov laments. 'The distance was too short, and besides the "local hero", my main rival continued to play exceptionally successfully.'

Game 70

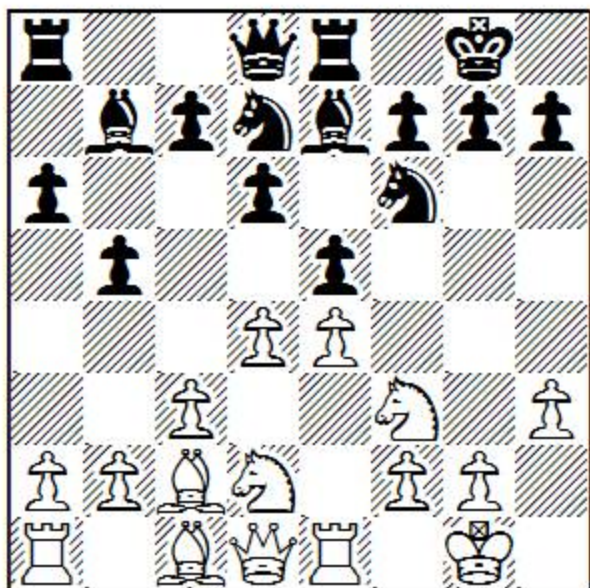
L.Ljubojevic-A.Karpov

Manila 1976, 3rd round

Ruy Lopez C95

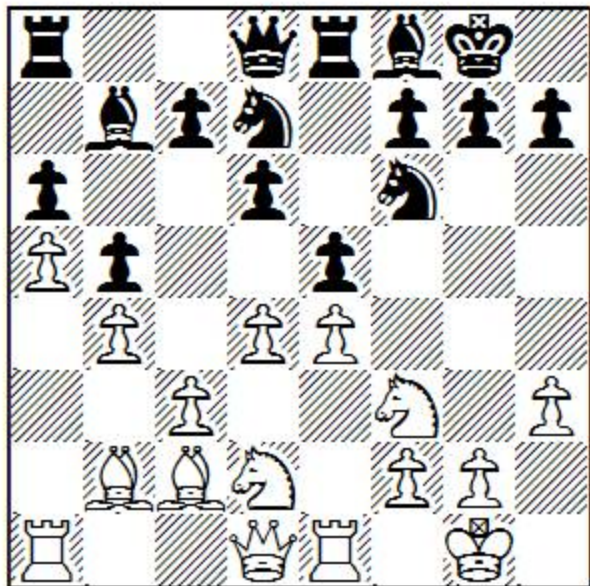
1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bb5 a6 4 Ba4 Nf6 5 0-0 Be7 6 Re1 b5 7 Bb3 d6 8 c3 0-0 9 h3 Nb8 10 d4 (10 d3 – *Game No.51*) 10 ... Nbd7 11 Nbd2 Bb7 12 Bc2 Re8

Karpov had a brilliant feeling for the subtleties of piece deployments in the Breyer Variation, and he played it for both sides with identical success. Out of 34 games begun with this variation, he won 12 and did not lose a single one! And in general he greatly respected the ‘queen of openings’, remembering Capablanca’s precept: the Ruy Lopez is the touchstone of understanding positional play.



I, also from childhood, remembered the opinion of another luminary – Keres, who thought that the development of a young player was inconceivable without a knowledge and, above all, an understanding of the subtleties of the Ruy Lopez, and that a knowledge of this opening was necessary for every strong player.

13 b4 (ten years later in Tilburg, Ljubojevic was to play more modestly against Karpov – 13 b3; for 13 a4 – cf. *Game No.102*) 13 ... Bf8
14 a4 Nb6 15 a5 Nbd7 16 Bb2



16 ... Rb8! (in his match with Fischer, Spassky played 16 ... Qb8?! – *Volume 4, Game No.104*) 17 Qb1

In the notes to the aforementioned game the continuation 17 Rb1 Ba8 is also examined – Karpov defeated Browne in this fashion two months later (Amsterdam 1976).

17 ... Nh5!

The removal of the queen from d1 has made this manoeuvre possible, with the intention of establishing the knight on the important f4-square and, in addition, facilitating ... c7-c5. The immediate 17 ... c5?! is dangerous on account of 18 bxc5 dxc5 19 dxe5 Nxe5 20 Nxe5 Rxe5 21 c4 (Karpov) 21 ... Re6 22 Rd1 Nd7 23 e5 g6 24 Be4.

18 c4?

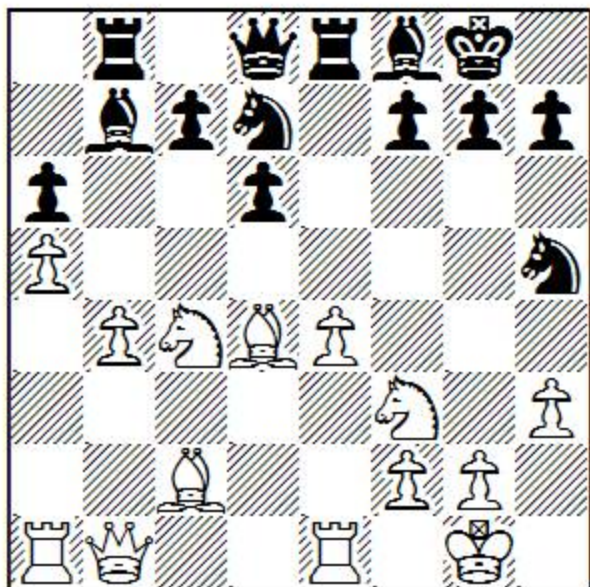
A faulty decision. The c3-pawn is the support of White's pawn chain, and its premature advance weakens his strong position in the centre and in addition has a veiled defect – the opposition of the white queen and the rook at b8. 18 Nf1 is correct, when in the event of 18 ... Nf4 19 Bc1 Qf6 20 N1h2 White could have neutralised the appearance of the black knight at f4. But Karpov was intending 18 ... c5!?

18 ... bxc4 19 Nxc4 exd4!

An important step in the activation plan. Now the black rooks come into play.

20 Bxd4

20 Nxd4 would have allowed Black to develop an initiative on the kingside: 20 ... Ne5! 21 Ne3 (not 21 Bb3 Nf4! or 21 Nd2 Bc8! Karpov) 21 ... Qg5.

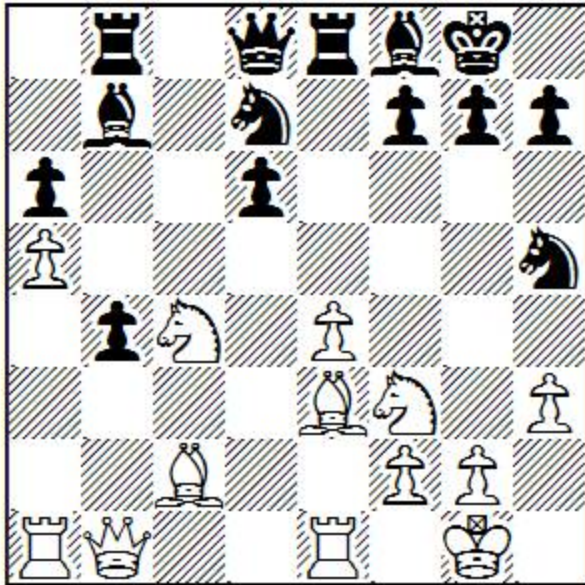


20 ... c5! 21 Be3

After 21 bxc5 Bxe4! White would have remained a pawn down: 22 Qd1 Nxc5 23 Bxc5 Bxc2 24 Rxe8 Qxe8 25 Qxc2 dxc5.

21 ... cxb4?

The immediate return of the knight by 21 ... Nhf6! was significantly stronger. White would have lost a pawn without any noticeable compensation, since the complications after 22 Bf4 Qc7 23 Qd1 (23 Ncd2 Bc6) 23 ... cxb4 24 Nd6 Re6 25 Nxf7 Qxf4 26 N3g5 Nc5 27 g3 Qc7 28 Bb3 Qe7 conclude to Black's advantage.



22 Nb6?

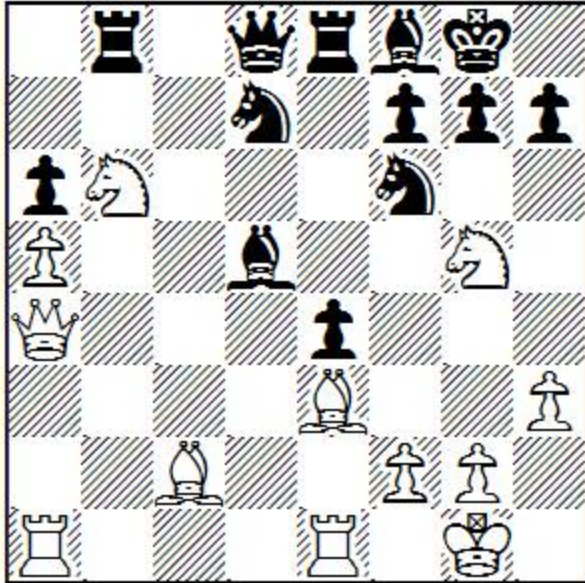
White misses his chance. The interposing of 22 Ba7! Ra8 23 Bd4 would have dislodged the rook from the b-file and enabled him to maintain the dynamic balance, for example: 23 ... Nhf6 24 Ncd2 Rb8 25 Ba4! Re6 26 Ba7 Ra8 27 Bd4, and if 27 ... Nc5 – 28 Bc2. Ljubojevic blocks the b-file in a primitive way, but now things become 'hot' for the e4-pawn.

22 ... Nhf6! 23 Qxb4 d5 24 Qb3 dxe4 25 Ng5 Bd5?

Another obvious, but unfortunate decision, which again changes the evaluation of the position. 25 ... Qe7! would have emphasised the unfortunate position of the knight at g5 and forced White to adopt extreme measures to liberate it. After 26 f3 exf3 (26 ... Nc5 27 Qc3 exf3 28 Bd4 Nfe4 29 Nxe4 Nxe4 30 Qxf3 Qb4 is also not bad) 27 Bf2 Ne5 28 gxf3 h6 29 f4 fxg5 30 fxe5 Nh5 White would have been left with a broken and cheerless position.

26 Qa4?

Fatal. The queen sacrifice 26 Nxd5! Rxb3 27 Bxb3 Nxd5 28 Bxd5 Ne5 29 Red1 would have allowed White to count on a draw.



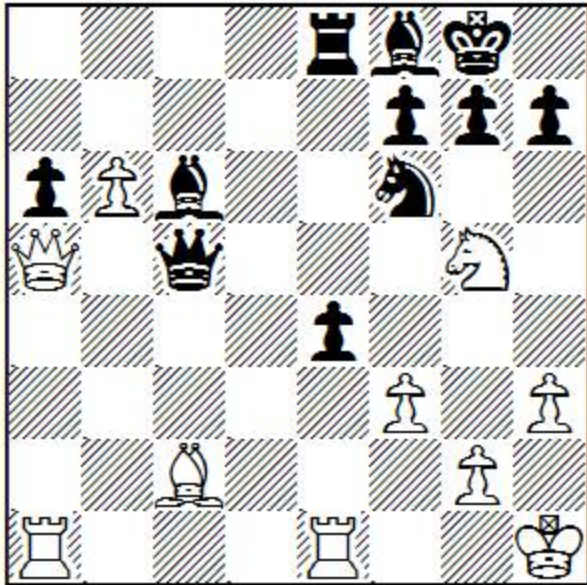
26 ... **Nxb6!** (the start of the final stage, which is accurately calculated by Karpov) 27 **Bxb6** (27 **axb6?** **h6**) 27 ... **Qe7!**

The opposition of the queen at b1 and rook at b8 has caused White a mass of problems, whereas there is no way of exploiting the opposition of the queen at e7 and rook at e1.

28 **f3** **Rxb6!** 29 **axb6** **Qc5+** 30 **Kh1**

After 30 **Kh2** the most flamboyant way of deciding matters was 30 ... **Bc6** 31 **Qa5** **Qf2!** 32 **Nxe4** **Nxe4** 33 **Rxe4** **Bd6+** 34 **Kh1** **Qg3** 35 **Rxe8+** **Bxe8** 36 **Kg1** **Qh2+** 37 **Kf2** **Bg3+** 38 **Ke3** **Qxg2** with an irresistible attack.

30 ... **Bc6!** (now loss of material is unavoidable) 31 **Qa5**



31 ... exf3!

Not weakening the attack. Going into the endgame by 31 ... Qxa5 32 Rxa5 Bb4 would have left White with saving hopes after 33 Rea1 or 33 Bb3.

32 Nxf3

32 Qxc5 was impossible because of the simple 32 ... Rxe1+ 33 Rxe1 (33 Qg1 fxg2+ 34 Kh2 Bd6 mate) 33 ... fxg2+ 34 Kh2 Bxc5 (Karpov).

32 ... Qxc2 33 Qxa6 Bxf3 34 gxf3 Rxe1+ 35 Rxe1 Nh5!

Accuracy to the end! After the immediate 35 ... Qf2 there would have followed 36 Rf1 Qg3 37 Qc8! Nd5 38 b7 Ne3 39 Rg1 Qxf3 40 Kh2 Qf2 41 Kh1, 'when Black has only a draw' (Karpov).

36 Re8 (36 Rg1 Qc6! 37 Kg2 Bd6) 36 ... Qf2

This concludes the game, since Black's king hides from the checks at h6, and White's perishes.

37 Rxf8+ Kxf8 38 Qa3+ Ke8 39 Qa4+ Ke7 40 Qb4+ Kf6 41 Qd6+ Kg5 42 Qe5+ Kh6 0-1

This was indeed a brilliant win by the world champion over one of the strongest foreign players at that time. Karpov won numerous games thanks to his superiority in understanding of position, but here he also 'out-calculated' an opponent who was famed for his calculating ability.

The tournament in Manila is memorable not only for this game. Karpov: 'A friend of Fischer – the Filipino Florencio Campomanes, FIDE Vice-President, had long been wanting to arrange a meeting between us. When I arrived in Manila, Campo confidentially informed me that Fischer would also be coming. But the tournament ended, and there was still no Fischer ... On the way to the airport it transpired that Campomanes wanted to accompany me to Tokyo. It was then that I realised that he had somehow agreed to meet Fischer in Japan.'

On 11th and 12th August the champions met for a second time – on this occasion in Cordoba in Spain, not far from where, in Montilla, Karpov had won a comparatively minor tournament (+5=4). These discussions are described in more detail in Volume 4. 'Botvinnik, whom Karpov informed by telephone about his meetings with Fischer, was doubtful: "But are you sure it was really him that you talked with, and not his double?" Yes, this appearance of the former champion came as a complete surprise for everyone.' (Roshal)

But the end of the year was approaching, and with it the most severe examination for the world champion – more severe than many international tournaments: the 44th USSR Championship (Moscow, November-December 1976). Karpov was again suffering from a cold, and in addition his parents were seriously ill, but there was no way that he could withdraw. His appearance was awaited with enormous interest. In its way this was a unique occurrence: earlier, of the Soviet world champions, in the years when they were champion, only Botvinnik had played in the USSR Championship – in 1951, 1952 and 1955 (and only once, in 1952, did he finish first, after a play-off match with Taimanov).

Tal: 'For the first time in the history of Soviet chess, the title of world champion had been gained before winning the gold medal of champion of the country, but perhaps more important was the fact that it was a long time since chess players had seen Karpov in real "action". He had gained several victories in international tournaments, but these events did not provoke any particular resonance. At the start of the championship Karpov looked out of training. A couple of draws, and a severe defeat against Geller – all this appeared to herald a sensation ...

Indeed, it was not easy for Karpov to endure the loss to Geller (*Volume 2, Game No.102*) and the ovation in the hall in honour of his opponent. The sports authorities were also seriously concerned ...

True, in the 4th round the champion was 'helped' by Balashov, who for a long time in their game did not succumb to the 'Spanish torture', but sealed at the adjournment an indifferent move, and at the very start of the resumption (on the 43rd move!) suddenly placed his queen en prise and promptly resigned. Although, in general, this tournament was probably the best in Balashov's career: this was his only loss and in the second half of the event only he tried to maintain the tempo set by Karpov.

By also defeating Kupreichik with White, and drawing with Black against Petrosian ('a study-like save in a very difficult rook ending') and Romanishin, the world champion somewhat improved his standing. After seven rounds the position in the leading group was this: Balashov – 5; Dorfman and Rashkovsky – 4½; Geller, Karpov, Petrosian, Polugayevsky and Tal – 4. From this it is evident how competitively important was the 8th round clash between Karpov and Iosif Dorfman (who, incidentally, also played excellently in the next USSR Championship, sharing 1st-2nd places).

Tal: 'This game completely gripped not only the entire auditorium. I was playing on a neighbouring board, and from time to time it occurred to me that the position in it interested me more than my own game. I think that many of the players experienced the same feeling: the table at which this battle was taking place was constantly surrounded by a tight circle.' Yes, there were times when even the pragmatic Karpov would himself impose an ultra-sharp struggle on his opponents and in so doing act resourcefully and confidently! Dorfman accepted the challenge, and the result was a very interesting and unusually complicated chess spectacle.

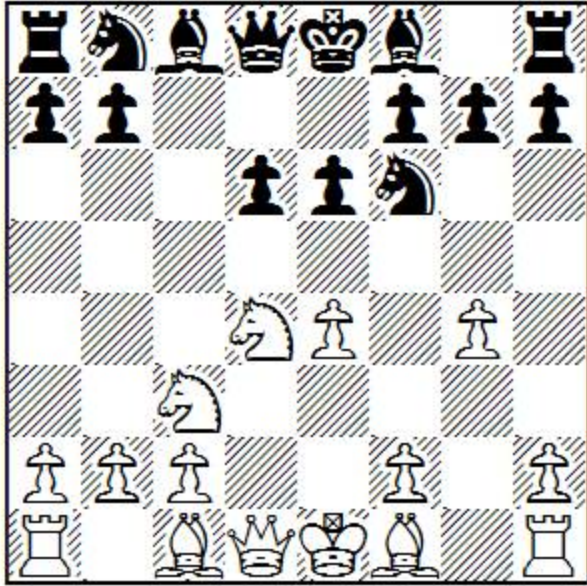
Game 71

A.Karpov-I.Dorfman

44th USSR Championship, Moscow 1976, 8th round

Sicilian Defence B81

1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Nf6 5 Nc3 e6 6 g4

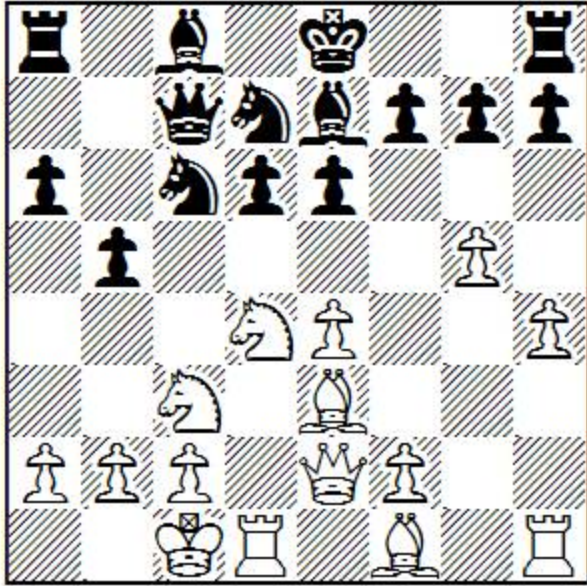


‘In those instances when victory is absolutely essential, I revert to this sharp variation devised by the unforgettable Paul Petrovich Keres. And I was in fact meeting one of the tournament leaders.’ (Karpov)

6 ... Be7 (6 ... Nc6 – *Game No.50*; 6 ... h6 – *Game Nos.83 and 89*) 7 g5 Nfd7 8 h4 Nc6 9 Be3 a6 10 Qe2

A move which creates the grounds for the sharp thrusts Nf5 or Nd5. But, as was mentioned in the notes to the game with Hort, 10 Qh5!? is more unpleasant for Black.

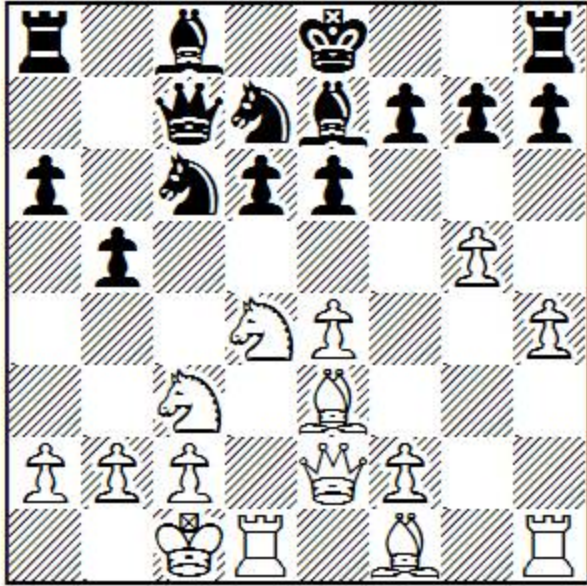
10 ... Qc7?!



This development of the queen to its usual Sicilian position is not always the best decision. Here, on the contrary, it hinders the most rapid development of Black's counterattack. 10 ... Nxd4 11 Bxd4 0-0 12 0-0-0 b5 was necessary, leaving the c-file for the rook, and allowing the queen the possibility of going to a5.

11 0-0-0 b5

'Black provokes his opponent into making a sacrifice, apparently not fearing its consequences.' (Karpov)



12 Nxc6!

After a long think Karpov decided against the immediate knight sacrifice 12 Nf5, since 'the *zwischenzug* 12 ... b4! leads to immense complications – 13 Nd5 exd5 14 exd5 Nde5!'. A thorough analysis (naturally, with the help of a computer) has shown that 15 Nxg7+ Kf8 16 Ne6+! fxe6 17 dxc6 promises White excellent prospects in this chaos, for example: 17 ... Qxc6 18 f4 b3! 19 axb3 Qxh1 20 fxe5 d5 21 Qf2+ Ke8! 22 Bg2 (the crafty nature of 18 ... b3 is revealed – the opening of the a-file cancels out the bishop check: 22 Bb5+?? axb5 23 Rxh1 Ra1+) 22 ... Qh2 23 Rh1 Qxe5 24 Bd4 Bxg5+ 25 hxg5 Qxg5+ 26 Kb1 Rf8 27 Qe2 and, despite Black's material advantage, it is hard for him to defend.

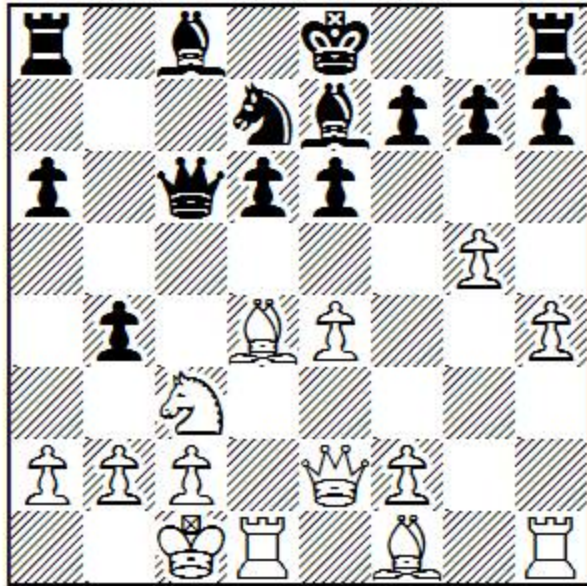
Karpov considered the natural capture 12 ... exf5 to be bad because of 13 Nd5 Qd8 14 exf5. However, the consequences of 13 ... Qa5! 14 exf5 0-0! are not at all obvious: 15 f6 Bd8 16 fxg7 Re8 17 Qh5 Nce5.

One has to give Karpov's wonderful intuition its due; it sometimes forced him to run counter to his own calculation of variations – and in so doing to avoid barriers that were invisible even to him! On this occasion too Karpov's sense of danger did not let him down: his choice of the moment for the knight sacrifice proved correct.

12 ... Qxc6 13 Bd4! b4?

Dorfman practically forces his opponent to sacrifice a piece, hoping that Karpov will be uncomfortable in the resulting positions with a disrupted material balance

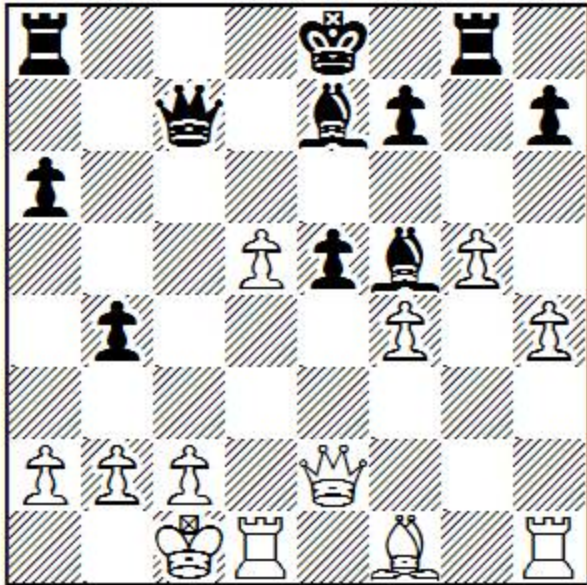
The two players considered the banal 13 ... 0-0 to be too risky. Karpov writes: 'After castling, Black would immediately have come under a pawn attack.' But, in allowing the Keres Attack, Black should not be afraid of a pawn offensive on the kingside!



14 Nd5! exd5 15 Bxg7

The alternative attacking plan 15 exd5? Qxd5 16 Bxg7 Qxh1 17 Re1 Ne5 18 Bxe5 dxe5 19 Qxe5 would have been refuted by the simple 19 ... 0-0!

15 ... Rg8 16 exd5 Qc7 17 Bf6 Ne5 18 Bxe5 dxe5 19 f4 Bf5



20 Bh3?!

By exchanging the bishop at f5, White effectively kills the planned counterplay on the c-file. Even when attacking, Karpov endeavours to restrict the opponent's activity! But such prophylactic thinking, when mounting an offensive which demands determined measures, does not always prove effective.

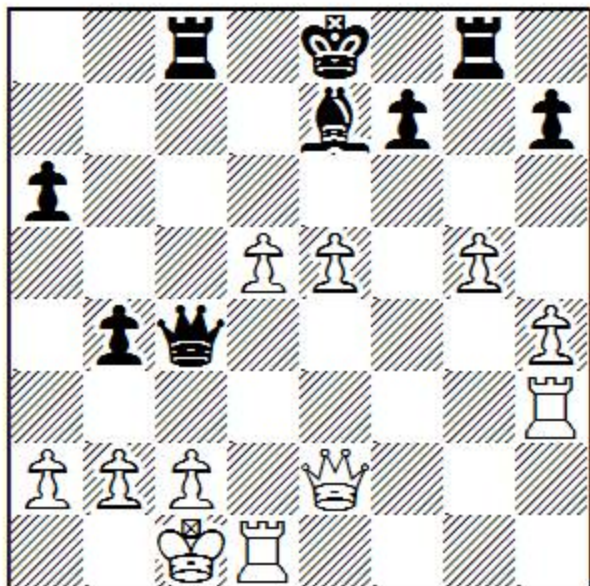
White would have gained an obvious advantage by the immediate 20 fxe5! Rc8 21 Rh2!, when the black queen cannot go to c4. However, Karpov did not like the fact that his opponent would gain counterplay after 21 ... Qa5 22 Qf3 b3! 23 Qxb3 (23 Qxf5? even loses: 23 ... bxa2! 24 Qxc8+ Bd8 25 Qc6+ Kf8) 23 ... Rg6. Here Karpov wrongly cuts short his analysis – after 24 Qf3! Bd7 25 Rf2 Rg7 26 e6! Black loses quickly.

20 ... Bxh3 21 Rxh3 Rc8 22 fxe5

Again as an alternative Karpov suggests the prophylactic move 22 b3, depriving Black of the c4-square, on which he based his almost saving counterplay. He speaks of an advantage for White after 22 ... e4 23 Qxe4 Kf8, but this advantage is not secured either by his suggested 24 f5 Bd6 25 f6 on account of 25 ... Qd7 26 Rf3 Rg6, or by 24 Qxh7 Qxf4+ 25 Kb1 Qd6 26 Qf5 Rc7.

22 ... Qc4!

After ending up in a desperate position, Dorfman finds an excellent regrouping.



23 Rdd3?!

This natural move was passed over by the commentators, although in many variations it is the weakening of White's back rank that prevents him from victoriously concluding his attack. Karpov again adheres to the strategy of restricting the opponent's possibilities and wants to retain the h4 and g5 pawn pair, which ties down Black's forces.

The sacrifice of these pawns looks more frightening – 23 Rhd3! Qxh4 (the regrouping carried out in the game – 23 ... Qf4+? 24 Kb1 Rc4, loses quickly here: 25 e6 Re4 26 exf7+ Kxf7 27 Qh5+ Kg7 28 Rf3) 24 d6 Bxg5+ 25 Kb1 Rd8 26 e6, but the cool-headed 26 ... Rg6! enables Black to stay afloat: 27 e7 Bxe7 28 dxe7 Rxd3 29 Qxd3 Qxe7 30 Qd4 Rf6.

However, genuinely fearful experiences await Black after the prophylactic 24 Kb1! The following illustrative variation concludes with the transition into an endgame, where Black can count on a draw: 24 ... Rc4 25 d6 Re4 26 Re3! Rxe3 27 Qxe3 Bxg5 28 Qa7 Bd8 29 e6! fxe6 30 Rf1 Bf6 31 d7+ Ke7 32 d8Q+ Kxd8 33 Qa8+ Ke7 34 Qxg8 Qd4! 35 Qxh7+ Bg7 36 c3 bxc3 37 Qc2! Qb6 38 b3 Qe3. But it is not at all

obvious that Black would have been able to negotiate all these mined squares with such small losses.

23 ... Qf4+! 24 Kb1 Rc4! 25 d6

The direct 25 e6 succeeds brilliantly after 25 ... fxe6? 26 d6 Re4 27 Qh5+ Qf7 28 Qd1 Bf8 29 Qh1! Qb7 30 Kc1! Rg7 31 d7+! Rxd7 32 Rxd7 Kxd7 33 Re3, but the centralising 25 ... Re4! again saves Black. For example: 26 exf7+ Qxf7 27 Rhe3 Rxe3 28 Rxe3 Rg6, while the immediate 26 Rhe3 runs into the spectacular 26 ... Rxg5!! 27 hxg5 Bxg5.

25 ... Re4! 26 Rhe3 Rxe3

Here 26 ... Rxg5? 27 hxg5 Bxg5 28 d7+ Kd8 no longer works on account of the spectacular counter-sacrifice 29 Rd1! Qxe3 30 Qxa6! Qc5 31 Qb7, or even the prosaic 29 Qg2! Rxe3 30 Qa8+ with mate.

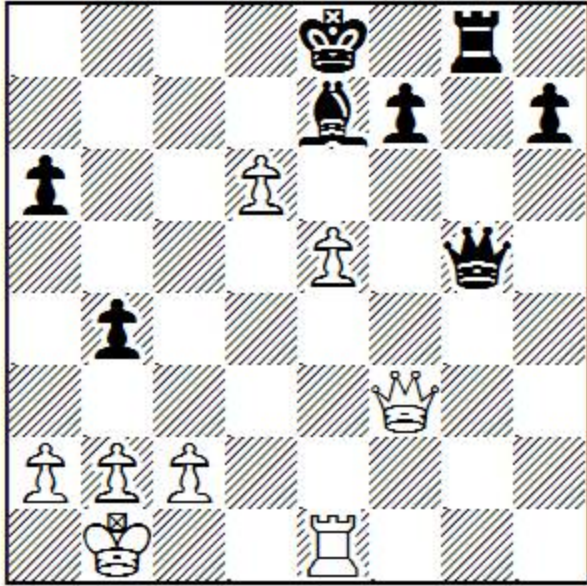
27 Rxe3 Qxh4 28 Qf3 Qxg5

The other pawn captures are equally bad: 28 ... Rxg5? 29 Qc6+ Kf8 30 dxe7+ Kxe7 31 a3!, or 28 ... Bxg5? 29 e6 fxe6 30 Rxe6+ Kd8 31 Qc6! And only the retreat 28 ... Bd8!, calculated without difficulty by the computer and not mentioned by any of the commentators, leaves Black with chances of a successful defence.

The computer goes on to produce some amazing variations, in which the black king feels secure in the middle of the board and which a human player would examine seriously only in analysis: 29 e6 fxe6 30 Rxe6+ Kd7 31 Qf5 (or 31 Re3 Kxd6 32 Qb7 Qc4! 33 Rd3+ Ke5 34 b3 Qc5 35 Qb8+ Kf5 36 Rxd8 Qg1+ 37 Kb2 Qc5!! with a draw) 31 ... Qxg5 32 Re7+ Kc6 33 Qc8+ Kb5 34 Rb7+ Bb6 35 a4+ bxa3 36 Qd7+ Kc5 37 b4+ Kd4! 38 Qxh7 Bd8 39 Qd3+ Ke5. If all this is correct, it must be acknowledged that the far from obvious inaccuracies, committed by Karpov on moves 20 and 23, lost White the greater part of his advantage, leaving him only with the initiative.

29 Re1

‘White would have retained a certain advantage after 29 Qc6+ Kf8 30 dxe7+ Qxe7 31 Qh6+ Rg7 32 b3, but I wanted more, and so I “restricted” myself to a quiet – but in fact risky – move.’ (Karpov). The immediate regaining of the piece was objectively the best continuation, but with time-trouble approaching the champion continues to build up the pressure.



29 ... Qg2?!

Up till now Dorfman has succeeded in parrying the onslaught, but here he loses the thread of the game. 29 ... Qg4 30 Qc6+ Qd7, as suggested by Karpov, after 31 Qe4! Bd8 32 Qxh7 would still have obliged Black to defend accurately for a long time – for example, 32 ... Rf8 33 Rg1 a5 34 Rg8 Be7 35 Rg7 Bd8, but the final outcome of the battle would have remained unclear.

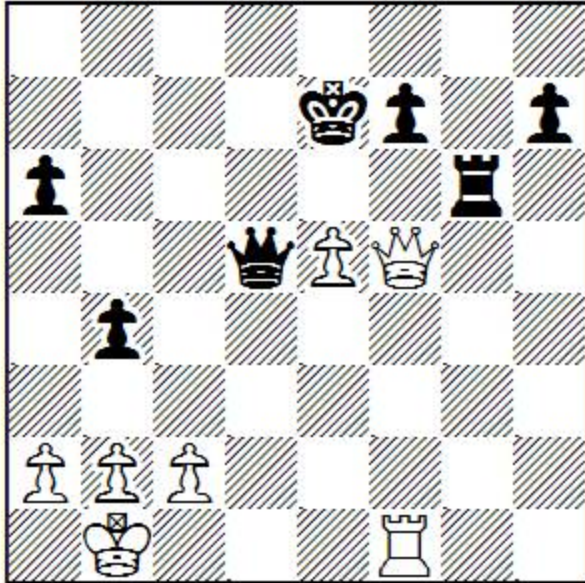
30 Qf5! (Black obviously overlooked this move) **30 ... Rg6?**

Premature panic. Now White regains the piece in a highly favourable version. By continuing the pursuit of the white queen: 30 ... Qg4! 31 Qxh7 Qg6! (White's threats can hardly be parried after 31 ... Bh4 32 Rf1 Rg7 33 Qd3 Qc8 34 Rd1), Black would have created the greatest difficulties for his opponent, for example: 32 Qh3 Qg4 33 Qd3 Bh4 34 Rf1 Qe6 – Black remains a piece up, not allowing a definite evaluation of the position to be made.

31 Rf1

From this moment all White's moves, speaking in modern language, tally with the 'first line of the computer'.

31 ... Qd5 32 dxe7 Kxe7

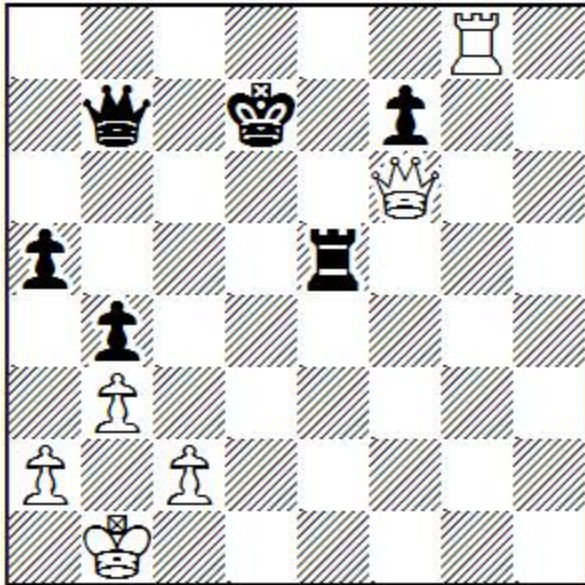


33 Qf4! a5 34 Qh4+ Ke8 35 Qxh7 Qf3 36 Qh8+ Ke7 37 Qh4+ Ke8 38 Qc4 Qb7 39 b3

White has succeeded in making an escape square, without lessening the tempo of the attack. Black now has nothing to hope for.

39 ... Re6 40 Rg1 Rxe5 41 Rg8+ Ke7 42 Qh4+ Kd7 43 Qf6!

The final subtlety, worked out during analysis of the adjourned position. White forces the rook to retreat, abandoning the a5-pawn to its fate.



43 ... Re7 44 Qf5+ Kd6 45 Qxa5

'It's all very well checking, but a pawn is a pawn ... ' the winner philosophically comments.

45 ... Re5

In reply to 45 ... Qe4 46 Qb6+ Ke5 47 Qc5+ Karpov gives a variation that is almost 20 moves long, consisting, in his opinion, of the strongest moves for both sides. But, as is well known, any long variation inevitably contains a mistake. That is the case here: '47 ... Kf4 48 Rb8 ... ' Here 48 Qg5+ Kf3 49 Qg2+ Ke3 50 Rg3+ is immediately decisive, but instead of the suicidal 47 ... Kf4 Black can prolong the game with 47 ... Kf6, although the win for White is merely a question of time.

46 Qd8+ Ke6 47 Kb2 f6 48 Rf8 Qg7 49 Qc8+ Kd5 50 Qc4+ 1-0

Karpov: 'After this psychologically important win things went much better.' Tal: 'As often happens, this brilliant win sharply changed not so much the world champion's tournament position, as his mood. Karpov literally forced his way into the leading group, and then, without reducing speed, began overtaking his neighbours in the tournament table one after another.'

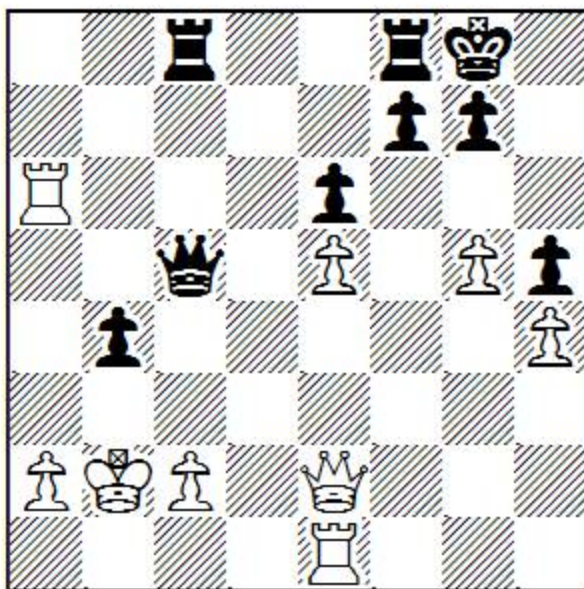
For some reason the ex-champion does not mention his meeting with Karpov in the 10th round, in which with Black he chose the same variation of the Sicilian as Torre in Manila. On this occasion Karpov was prepared and he employed an interesting novelty, but Tal did not

become flustered and offered a clever queen sacrifice, which clearly surprised the champion: he thought for 40 minutes over his reply. And in the end he thought it best to decline the sacrifice and offer a draw. But Tal refused! And indeed, White's position was already worse, and after a series of inaccuracies by Karpov it became altogether critical. According to eye-witnesses, Baturinsky went very pale at that moment.

Game 72

A.Karpov-M.Tal

44th USSR Championship, Moscow 1976, 10th round



31 ... Rfd8

The simple 31 ... Qd4+ 32 Kb1 Qxh4 seemed unclear because of 33 g6, but these fears are not shared by computer: after 33 ... fxg6 with the threat of ... Rf2 Black is bound to win. 'It is difficult to convey what went on at that time in the hall and in the press centre. Everyone kept finding wins for the ex-world champion. But the champion continued to come out unscathed on the board.' (Roshal)

32 Kb1 Rd5?

An amnesty! The prophylactic 32 ... g6! followed by ... Rd5(4) would still have retained a winning position. Now, however, White finds the only saving resource.

33 g6! fxg6 34 Rxe6 Rcd8 35 Rc1! Qc3 36 Rxc6 Rxe5 37 Qf2 Red5 ½-½

The draw was greeted by an ovation in the auditorium. That evening Tal looked more than upset ...

Only after this miraculous escape did Karpov indeed 'force his way into the leading group'. In the next six rounds – an amazing occurrence for him! – he won four games with Black (one of them, with K.Grigorian, is mentioned in the notes to *Volume 2, Game No.103*), and then also his last game with White. And he concluded the tournament in true champion style: 1. Karpov – 12 out of 17 (+8–1=8); 2. Balashov – 11; 3-4. Petrosian and Polugayevsky – 10½; 5. Dorfman – 9½; 6-7. Smyslov and Tal – 9, etc.

This USSR Championship provoked a wave of comments throughout the chess world. 'One gains the impression that Karpov, for all his frail appearance, was the only competitor in this marathon who not only maintained his strength, but even continued to increase the tempo right up to the finish. He had to accomplish a whole series of competitive feats,' grandmaster Donner wrote admiringly. He was echoed by grandmaster Byrne: 'Karpov is superior to his opponents in his ability to mobilise all this strength to the utmost at the decisive and most difficult moment.'

Early in 1977 the champion as though gained his second wind, and he achieved a series of brilliant results, which left no doubts about his superiority. In March – victory in Bad Lauterberg: 1. Karpov – 12 out of 15 (+9=6); 2. Timman – 10; 3. Furman – 9; 4. Sosonko – 8½ (ahead of Hübner, Olafsson, Gligoric, Miles, Andersson, Torre ...). In April – an impressive 5 out of 5 at the European Team Championship in Moscow (wins over Smejkal, Ljubojevic, Gheorghiu, Portisch and Keene). In May – triumph in Las Palmas: 1. Karpov – 13½ out of 15 (+12=3); 2. Larsen – 11; 3. Timman – 10 (ahead of Tal, Browne, Adorjan, Miles ...).

And only at the summer super-tournament in Leningrad, dedicated to the 60th anniversary of the October Revolution, did fatigue obviously begin to tell: Karpov finished behind Romanishin, Tal and Smyslov. However, even in this tournament he played several 'purely Karpovian games'. Here is one of these.

Game 73

A.Karpov-J.Smejkal

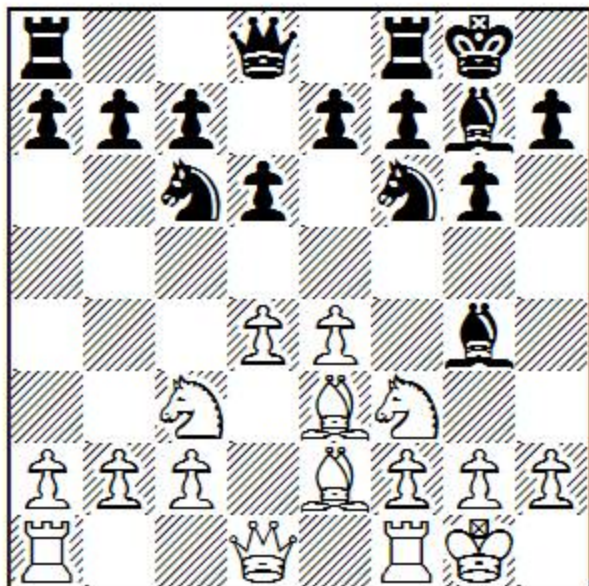
Leningrad 1977, 3rd round

Pirc-Ufimtsev Defence B08

1 e4 g6

In the spring, at the European Team Championship in Moscow, Smejkal had lost a 'Spanish duel' to Karpov, and now he tries his luck in another opening.

2 d4 Bg7 3 Nc3 d6 4 Nf3 Nf6 5 Be2 0-0 6 0-0 Bg4 (6 ... c5 – Game No.77) 7 Be3 Nc6



8 Qd2

Soon afterwards the champion introduced 8 Qd3 (one of Zaitsev's ideas) 8 ... e5 9 d5 Nb4 (9 ... Ne7!?) 10 Qd2 a5 11 h3 Bd7 12 Bg5 with the initiative for White (Karpov-Korchnoi, 18th matchgame, Baguio 1978). But later it transpired that this can be neutralised by 8 ... Nd7 (Polugayevsky-Sax, Buenos Aires Olympiad 1978; Karpov-Timman, Amsterdam 1980).

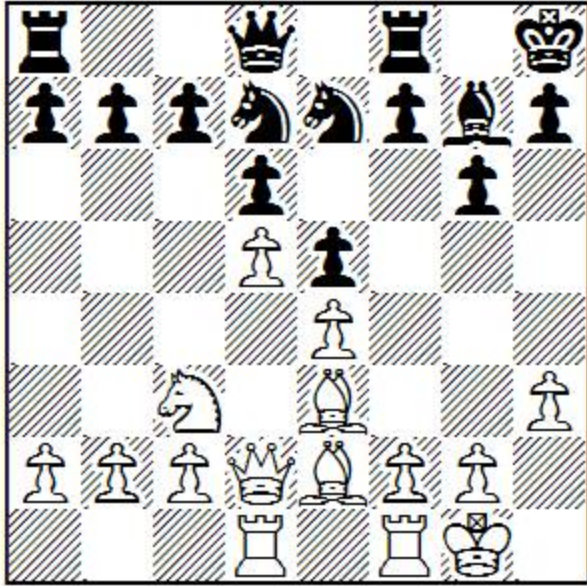
8 ... e5 9 d5 Ne7 10 Rad1

A useful move: its main aim is to hinder ... c7-c6 to the maximum extent.

10 ... Kh8

The alternatives 10 ... Bd7, 10 ... Bxf3, 10 ... Nd7, 10 ... Ne8 and 10 ... b5 were discussed in the analysis of the game Geller-Tal (*Volume 2, Game No.101*).

11 h3 Bxf3 12 Bxf3 Nd7 13 Be2



13 ... f5?!

Black should not have hurried with this move. All the same the prophylactic 13 ... a6 came into his plans, since then 14 f4 would lose its point: after 14 ... exf4 he would gain an excellent outpost at e5, whereas the e6-square would remain inaccessible to the white knight.

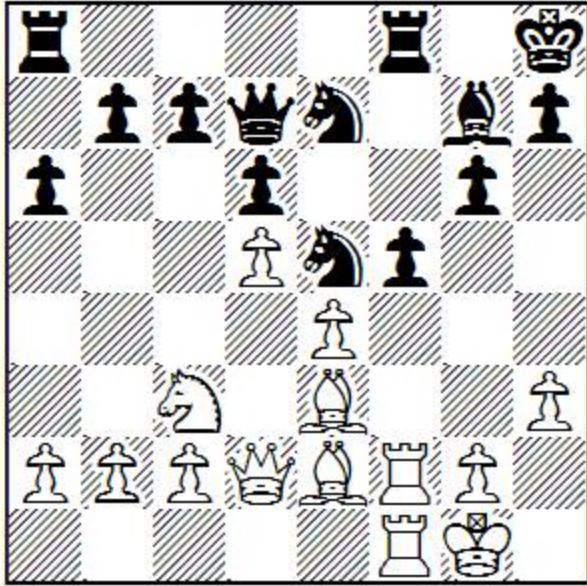
14 f4!

Now this advance is very timely: although he concedes control of the e5-square to Black, White gains fine play on the light squares in return.

14 ... a6

In the European Team Championship Keene recklessly tried to attack Karpov in King's Indian style – 14 ... g5?! But Black has little chance of creating serious threats to the white king without his light-squared bishop, and after 15 fxg5 f4 16 Bf2 h6 17 gxh6 Bxh6 a raid by the bishop into Black's position demonstrated the unsoundness of Keene's strategy: 18 Bg4 Nf6 19 Qe2 Rg8 20 Be6! Rg7 21 Kh1 Ng6 22 Rg1 Qe7 23 Rd3 Rh7 24 Bf5!, and White has a clear advantage.

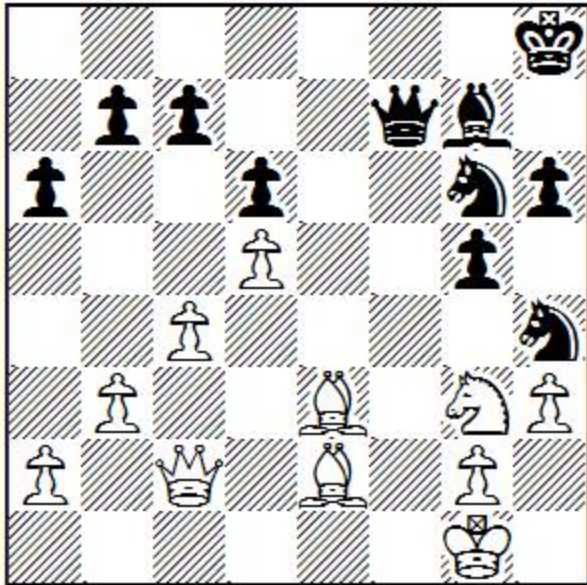
15 fxe5 Nxe5 16 Rf2 Qd7 17 Rdf1



17 ... fxe4?!

The relieving of the pawn tension without sufficient justification usually makes things easier for the opponent. I would have preferred 17 ... Rae8 18 Bf4 Nf7.

18 Nxe4 Rxf2 19 Bxf2 h6 20 b3 Rf8 21 c4 g5 22 Ng3! N7g6 23 Be3 Rxf1+ 24 Bxf1 Qf7 25 Qc2 Nh4 26 Be2 Neg6



There is a viscous, manoeuvring struggle in progress, in which Black constantly has to concern himself with consolidating his position.

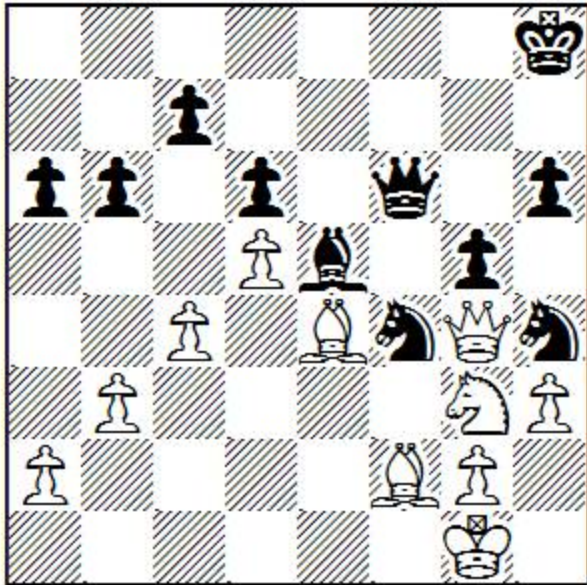
27 Bd3?!

To me another regrouping seems far more dangerous: 27 Bh5! Qf6 28 Qe4! Now 28 ... Qa1+ 29 Nf1 Qf6 30 g3 Nf5 31 Bf2 Nge7 32 Ne3 Qe5 33 Qxe5 Bxe5 34 Nxf5 Nxf5 leads to an endgame with two bishops against bishop and knight, in which White has quite good winning chances. And the attempt to counterattack – 28 ... Nf4 29 Qe8+ Kh7 30 Bf7 Qa1+ 31 Nf1 h5 leaves White a pawn up as the result of a spectacular tactical skirmish: 32 Bxf4 gxf4 33 Qe4+ Kh8 34 Qxf4 Bd4+ 35 Kh1 Be3 36 Qxe3 Qxf1+ 37 Qg1 Qxf7 38 Qd4+ and Qxh4.

27 ... Be5?

Missing an unexpected opportunity to activate his pieces: 27 ... Nf4! 28 Be4 Qf6 with the intention of ... Qa1+ and ... Be5. Smejkal, who was in his customary time-trouble, did not risk taking his queen far away from his king, and Karpov immediately finds an excellent opportunity to activate his own queen and remind the opponent of the weakness of the light squares in his position.

28 Bf2 Nf4 29 Be4 Qf6 30 Qd1! b6 31 Qg4!



Somehow imperceptibly White has made much greater progress in strengthening his position, and it becomes hard for Black to find a good move.

31 ... Kg7?!

The more tenacious 31 ... Qd8 would have allowed White a pleasant choice between preparing to go into a favourable endgame – 32 Nh5 Nxf5 33 Qxf5 Qf6 34 Qe8+ Kg7 35 Qd7+ Qf7 36 Qg4 Ng6 37 g3, and the creation of an offensive on the queenside – 32 b4 Qe8 33 c5.

32 Be3 Kf7 33 Qc8 Qe7?

With his flag about to fall, Smejkal overlooks an unexpected bishop leap and loses immediately. However, 33 ... Nfxg2! followed by 34 Qxc7+ Kf8 35 Qc8+ Kf7 can be called better only because it contains a trap – 36 Nh5? Bh2+! 37 Kh1 Qa1+ 38 Bc1 Be5!, and White has to give perpetual check: 39 Qe6+ Kf8 40 Qxh6+ Kf7 41 Qh7+ Kf8 42 Bb1 Qc3 43 Qh6+ Kf7. However, by 36 Qe6+! Qxe6 37 dxe6+ Kxe6 38 Bxg2 Bxg3 39 Bd5+ Kf5 40 Bxb6 he transposes into a technically won endgame.

34 Bh7! Nxf3+ 35 Qxf3 1-0

The world champion concluded the year as he had begun it – on a victorious note, by confidently winning the autumn super-tournament in

Tilburg: 1. Karpov – 8 out of 11 (+5=6); 2. Miles – 7; 3-6. Hort, Hübner, Kavalek and Timman – 6, etc.

Soon, after the final Candidates match (cf. the chapter 'Belgrade Revenge'), Karpov's opponent in the match for the world championship was determined. To the dissatisfaction of the Soviet officials, it was the defector Viktor Korchnoi. As preparation for their coming encounters, both grandmasters played in strong tournaments in early 1978: one – in Wijk aan Zee (1. Portisch – 8 out of 11; 2. Korchnoi – $7\frac{1}{2}$; 3. Andersson – $6\frac{1}{2}$, etc.), and the other – in Bugojno (1-2. Karpov and Spassky – 10 out of 15; 3. Timman – 9, etc.).

The chess world, divided into West and East, hushed in anticipation of the long-awaited battle for the chess crown.

Baguio through the Eyes of Karpov

'The match in Baguio was the most troubled, the most scandalous event that I have ever taken part in,' recalls Karpov. 'Chess, the essence of which is a means of contact and mutual understanding between people, was transformed by Korchnoi into a field of animosity. Neither before nor after have I known anything like it ... The match began rather ponderously. We tried to become accustomed to each other, probing to discover who was in what sort of form; we weren't in a hurry to reveal our trumps. After all, the match – for the first time in half a century – was unlimited, up to six wins. It was not possible to predict how long it would last. I only knew one thing: there was no reason to hurry.'

This match regulations, which had a significant influence on the course of chess history, had an interesting origin. They were drawn up by a special FIDE committee, the first meeting of which took place back in February 1976 in Amsterdam. From the USSR those who participated in the work were Karpov and Baturinsky, representing the Soviet Chess Federation. At that time, naturally, Karpov spoke against an unlimited match, which had been foisted on chess society by Fischer. The Soviet side suggested playing to six wins, but with a limit of 24-30 games, and in the event of a tie the champion would retain his title.

Baturinsky: 'However, it very soon became clear that the majority – and in particular the FIDE President Dr Euwe – were already set on an "unlimited" match. The discussions reached an impasse ... But Euwe must be given his due – he found an interesting way out: not to place a

limit, but to play to six wins (and not ten, as Fischer insisted in his time); with a score of 5-5 the world champion would retain his title, but – a very important addition! – “the challenger would gain the right to play a new match with the champion within a year”. Then Euwe made another half step: the second match, if it was required, would be played with a restricted number of games. Everyone agreed to this, and yet it was not felt that this was the final decision.’

Everything was finally decided in the autumn of 1977 in Caracas, at a meeting of the FIDE Central Committee. One of the participants, grandmaster Averbakh, recalls that on the day of his arrival the Executive Director of the USA Chess Federation, Ed Edmondson, asked him to arrange a meeting with Karpov before the Committee began its work:

‘And that evening they met with me present. Edmondson immediately took the bull by the horns: “What regulations do you prefer?” And to my surprise Karpov said: “I would agree to play to six wins, and with a score of 5-5 – to the first win, but in this case I would like to have the right to a return match.” *(Although long before this FIDE had abolished return matches. – G.K.)* “Excellent!” Edmondson exclaimed, “I will help to convince the committee members to adopt your conditions.” And it all went through smoothly at the meeting of the Central Committee. The “local boss” Tudela, a well-known FIDE official, took the floor and proposed the conditions expressed above by the champion, adding “Only, we must ask Mr Karpov whether he is agreeable to these conditions?” Anatoly Evgenyevich graciously agreed ... Edmondson merely gave a cunning smile. In Baguio, with Karpov’s approval, he was appointed a member of the appeal jury.’

Karpov’s speech was recorded for posterity by another eye-witness of these events, the press attaché of the Soviet delegation, Roshal: ‘Many wish to see something new. Very well, I am prepared to play an unlimited match, even after having played such a large number of games in tournaments. Some are against the world champion having a draw “in reserve” – I also agree with that. I hope that I will not be required to play a return match. But if it should happen that way, that the challenger wins, then together with him the whole chess world will win too: millions of chess enthusiasts will receive a new stimulus towards the popularisation of our game in the form of a highly interesting return match. I am prepared to support this compromise.’

According to Roshal, the delegates began applauding Karpov even before the end of his speech, and 'only Euwe expressed some reservations about granting the world champion the right to a return match only in the event of him losing 5-6, but here he himself sensed that he was on his own.' The decision was approved almost unanimously. No one asked for the opinions of Korchnoi and Spassky, the participants in the final Candidates match. The situations that arose at the finish of the 1978 and 1984/85 matches could not then have been foreseen even in a terrible dream ...

Of course, Karpov was considered the favourite in the match, but it should be borne in mind that not long before it started he suffered a severe, irreplaceable loss. In March 1978 Semion Furman died – he had been the champion's permanent mentor, an outstanding chess theoretician, who understood, like no one else, the nature of his protégé's talent and who had successfully solved the strategic preparation tasks. 'Furman's death killed something in me,' Karpov was to say years later. 'I was as though enslaved and I could not relax, in order to take in anything new, make it my own – and thereby change myself. The absence of novelty led to boredom, and for this reason alone I was unable to force myself to work, as once I had selflessly laboured worked with Furman.'

Before Baguio, for personal reasons, a second trainer of the champion – Yuri Razuvaev – also 'retired'. Reserves had to be mobilised: the main personnel of the renewed team – Balashov, Zaitsev and Tal – had been well known to Karpov for a long time. This powerful brigade 'unearthed' numerous novelties, and yet it seems to me that the absence of Furman's consolidating hand was sometimes felt over the lengthy distance of a very difficult match.

Especially for this book, the champion's long-standing trainer, grandmaster Igor Zaitsev, has shared his memories of those distant days:

'Our first, 18-day training session before Baguio took place in early spring 1978 not far from Sochi, in the picturesque environs of the famous Krasnaya Polyana. Apart from the chess players – Karpov, Vasyukov and me – also present at the session was Vladimir Zukhar, a professor of medicine, Valery Krylov, an experienced physical trainer, and Viktor Bobylev, a chef, who later accompanied Karpov on nearly all his travels for many years. I was participating for the first time in such a colourful gathering. Everything here was new to me: from the relaxed

Karpov, competing desperately at billiards, to the daily one and a half hour walks in the intoxicating mountain air with a discussion of all kinds of chess and non-chess events ...

‘There then followed a thorough, six-week training session for the champion in the Georgian city of Gagry, with the participation of Tal, Balashov and the author of these lines. Here the training group that was to fly out with Karpov to the Philippines was set up, and the range of opening problems, which we might encounter in the match with Korchnoi, was outlined.

‘Although work on opening variations is in a state of constant flux, during a match itself one usually can only find various types of corrections and interesting micro-ideas. The production of large-scale analysis work is prevented by the everyday match commotion. For genuine theoretical dawnings and discoveries, prolonged deep concentration is required and even isolation. Therefore it was desirable to prepare all the main opening surprises before the match, and during it only to vary and refine the ideas found.

‘For White our analytical group was constantly looking at the Open Variation of the Ruy Lopez, and, of course, the French Defence with 3 Nd2 (just in case, we also worked on variations with the most critical continuation 3 Nc3). For Black we studied three fields which caused us a mass of problems: the variation of the Queen’s Gambit with 5 Bf4, the Carlsbad set-up and all possible variations of the English Opening.

‘In our training group the chess specialisation took place almost of its own accord. The tone in the analysis was set by the two outstanding players – Tal and Balashov. In addition, both of them possessed an outstanding and highly organised memory, and they could always offer exhaustive encyclopaedic information on any branch of theory. It was no accident that Furman, when exhorting young players, impressed on them: “If you want to know the latest word in theory, follow Tal’s games: he picks up new ideas more quickly than others!” Balashov’s memory easily accommodated all the classics and the entire body of modern opening theory. At the same time, you could always find out from him, for example, what day of the week it was on 31 October 1892, when Alekhine was born. I also cannot complain of my memory (I still give blindfold simultaneous displays), but when I encounter phenomenal manifestations of it – say, with Balashov, Tal, Kasparov or Ivanchuk, I involuntarily feel the great difference.

‘In this division of labour I was usually assigned the rather honourable role of the “clear head” – a person capable of looking at a position with unprejudiced eyes and from an unexpected angle. Apparently, thanks to these qualities, I was able to invent a whole series of completely new opening schemes and numerous improvements in variations during my period of active collaboration with Karpov.

‘The villa in Baguio, where Karpov was accommodated, was a gigantic old building, remaining from virtually the times of the conquistadors. A special tent of solid polyethylene was constructed above us so that no instrumentation could listen to us during our preparations. However, it wasn’t possible to remain inside such a confined space for long: within some forty minutes it became hard to breathe and your face became covered in a film of water (we are talking about the oceanic sub-tropics!). In good weather, after dividing into pairs, we would do our analysis in an open space on the first floor from morning till evening, with a short break for lunch. But as soon as it became dark, bats suddenly began noisily flying about and the entire space was filled with myriad insects and moths. And willy-nilly we had to move back into our polyethylene paradise ... During three months of searchings and anguish, we gave birth to a number of good ideas, although some “miscarriages” also occurred, as Tal wittily commented.’

The first game lasted only two hours. Karpov: ‘After making my 18th move, I offered a draw with full justification. Korchnoi thought a little, and then, without replying, gave it up as a bad job and began signing his score-sheet. I also signed my score-sheet and handed it to him; he pushed his somewhere to one side and, without looking up, signed my score-sheet. Then he quickly left, without offering his hand to me. But I thought that it was no less essential to do this, than before the start of a game (Tal, who was also present, was of the same opinion). Yes, Korchnoi immediately indicated that he saw the handshake as a pure formality.’

It would appear that for Karpov this was one of those drops, which soon overfilled his cup of patience. Another episode occurred after the drawn 2nd game, where there was an ending with rook and bishop against rook and knight. Anatoly reported that Korchnoi had said: ‘Karpov heard somewhere that a bishop is better than a knight. In the hands of Leonid Stein, perhaps, but not in his!’ There were also verbal attacks on Tal, to say nothing of Doctor Zukhar, who had already

landed on the 4th row (about this – cf. the chapter ‘Baguio through the Eyes of Korchnoi’). And as a result, Karpov suddenly refused to shake hands before the 8th game, which unsettled Korchnoi. This was a violation of the rules, and at the champion’s request Roshal read out a statement in the press centre, explaining the reasons for this act: ‘ ... Recent events have shown that the challenger has no intention of rejecting his course of aggravating the situation. Under such circumstances Karpov does not wish to shake hands with Korchnoi.’

However, in the given instance we are more interested in what happened on the chessboard. Let us again hand over to Zaitsev:

‘From the character of the opening battle we soon sensed that Korchnoi had prepared not haphazardly, as we had, but more purposefully and thoroughly, having firmly decided in advance the range of variations and set-ups which he intended to uphold in the match. The start of the match proved anxious: in the 3rd and 5th games Karpov encountered serious problems with Black, in the second of these saving himself from defeat only by a miracle (*Game No.29*). Any player who is planning to perform successfully hopes in the first instance for success with the white pieces, but in the initial games Anatoly was quite unable to gain any marked advantage in the Open Variation of the Spanish. In the 2nd game Korchnoi deliberately “fed” us a second-rate and, I would say, not very high-quality novelty. At home we quickly established its flaws, but in the 4th game the challenger, as though driven by some kind of special sense, deviated and again renovated the variation. And only in the 8th game was Karpov able finally to refute the opponent’s risky opening strategy (cf. p.120). The fact that Karpov managed to cope with a difficult problem at the board had far-reaching consequences.

‘Korchnoi, who by nature was a keen observer, had no doubt noticed long before that in the opening Karpov only very rarely plays for a direct refutation of the opponent’s plan and is usually prepared to satisfy himself with a solid positional solution, transferring the centre of gravity to middlegame manoeuvring. Only this can explain the occasional appearance in Korchnoi’s Black repertoire of theoretically not altogether reliable variations – such as 4 ... f5 in the Spanish (20th game of the 1974 match). In Baguio we thought it possible that the Riga and Berlin Variations might be played once (a variety of the latter turned up later in Merano). And we thought that his experience of employing the Dragon – a success in the 5th game of their training match (1971)

and a catastrophe in the 2nd game of the Candidates match (Game No.67) – should have indicated to Korchnoi just how dangerous it was to repeat dubious experiments against Karpov. However, in Baguio, when the champion was acting not very confidently, the challenger adhered to this risky course.

‘In my view, Korchnoi very keenly sensed his opponent’s condition and in general was distinguished by his outstanding psychological perception. In 1974 I was seconding Petrosian in his losing match with Korchnoi and I remembered for ever a highly unusual incident. During the 5th game, which proved to be the last in the match, in a fit of temper I made some harmless comment about Viktor Lvovich in a quiet whisper. Play was taking place in the enormous hall of the drama theatre, and on this occasion I was sitting in the dress circle, quite a long way from the stage ... But, oh horror: Korchnoi, who was thinking over his move, instantly turned his head and from among the thousand-strong mass of supporters he fixed his gaze on me!

‘After opening his account in the 8th game, Karpov tried to build on his success in the 10th by employing my sharp novelty in the Open Variation – 11 Ng5!? I had brought this idea to Krasnaya Polyana, and Karpov immediately took a fancy to it: we were constantly trying to perfect it. It became our heavy artillery, and it only remained to await a convenient moment to bring it into action. The knight sacrifice created a genuine furore in the chess world, but, alas, it did not produce the practical effect that we had hoped for. After thinking for a total of about an hour, Korchnoi made his way excellently through the tactical nuances and found a defence (cf. *Volume 2, Game No.118*).

‘And so, the theoretical torpedo missed its target, without having any marked influence on the competitive course of the match. But it nevertheless had a definite mutual psychological effect. The opponent saw that in the opening we had not only light machine-guns, but also howitzers, and he began acting far more cautiously. But the same episode also forced all of us to pull ourselves together: we had seen Korchnoi’s enormous chess potential with our own eyes.’

Karpov: ‘The win in the 8th game did not lessen the tension that was growing in me with every day. I needed to change my play more decisively, but as yet I was not ready for that. And in the 10th game this told. Korchnoi withstood a very heavy blow and defended brilliantly, whereas I did not exploit all my opportunities. It didn’t work immediately – and I was as though reconciled to this, and did not bother seeking a

win. Here I should have taken a time-out, but I didn't think to do that, and I set off for the next game.'

After his defeat in the 11th game the champion finally took a time-out, but the rest did not bring any relief: 'Everything should be done at the right time!' When he went along to the 12th game, he did not feel any desire to play: 'In this game I somehow just served my time. If Korchnoi had realised my condition, I would have been in trouble. But I successfully imitated the desire to gain immediate revenge, composure, confidence, energy – and he thought only about equalising, and after achieving it he did not conceal his satisfaction. The danger was over ... But the crisis could not last for ever. The turning point game in the 13th game. Not before, nor after – during the game. But the game began like the preceding ones: I played without desire, as though detached, increasingly unable to keep pace with my opponent's thoughts ... '

Game 74

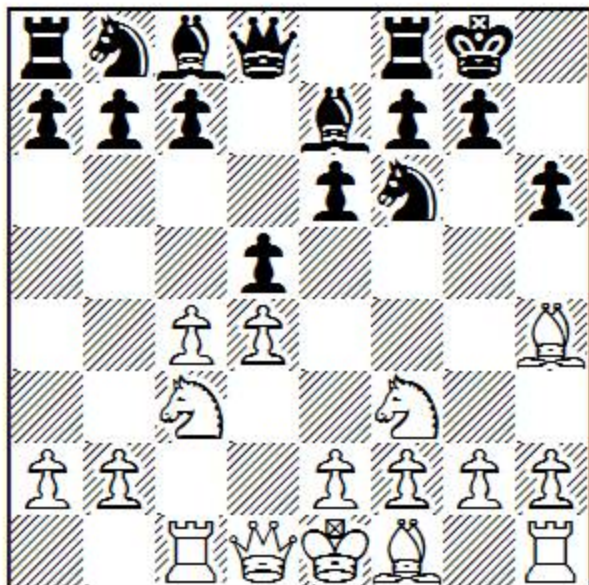
V.Korchnoi-A.Karpov

World Championship Match, Baguio 1978, 13th game

Queen's Gambit D53

1 c4 Nf6 2 Nc3 e6 3 Nf3 d5 4 d4 Be7 5 Bg5 h6 6 Bh4 0-0 7 Rc1

Korchnoi's patent plan. The 1st, exploratory game of the match went 7 e3 b6 8 Rc1 (8 cxd5 – *Volume 4, Game No.103*; 8 Be2 – *Game No.65*) 8 ... Bb7 9 Bd3 (also avoiding 9 Bxf6!? Bxf6 10 cxd5 – *Game No.28*) 9 ... dxc4 10 Bxc4 Nbd7 11 0-0 c5 12 dxc5 Nxc5 13 Qe2 a6 14 Rfd1 Qe8 15 a3 Nfe4 with equality. And 15 Ne5 b5 16 Nxb5?! (Kasparov-Karpov, 36th matchgame, Moscow 1984/85) is refuted by 16 ... Qb8!



7 ... b6 (later Karpov introduced 7 ... dxc4! – *Game No.84*) 8 Bxf6 (8 cxd5 – *Volume 3, Game No.39*) 8 ... Bxf6 9 cxd5 exd5 10 g3

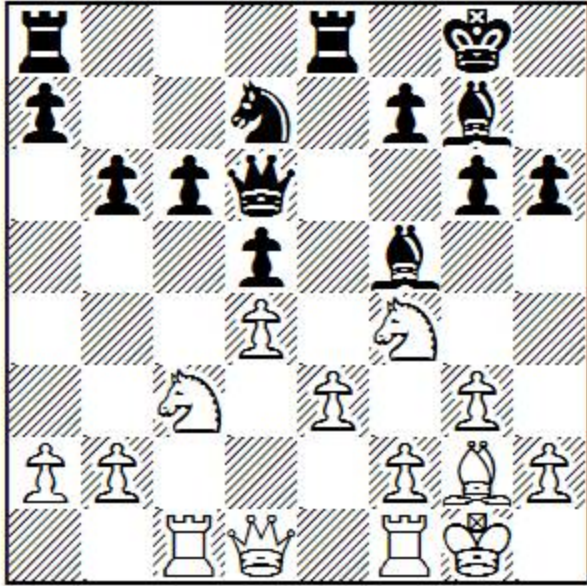
By developing his bishop at g2, White wants to hinder ... c7-c5 by putting pressure on the d5-pawn, while after ... c7-c6, as in the game, he can restrict the black pawn chain by b2-b4.

10 ... c6

A solid set-up, where all the conflicts are deferred to the middlegame. 10 ... Be6 11 Bg2 c5 12 0-0 Nc6 13 dxc5 bxc5 is more active. Not long before the match this is what one of Karpov's recent trainers played; the continuation was 14 Ne1 Rb8 15 Nd3 c4 16 Nf4 Rxb2 17 Ncxd5 Bxd5 18 Bxd5 Ne5 with equality (Olafsson-Geller, Wijk aan Zee 1977), but in the event of 15 Nxd5! Bxd5 16 Bxd5 Nb4 17 Bb3 Black would still have had to fight for equality.

11 Bg2 Bf5 12 0-0 Qd6 13 e3 Nd7 14 Ne1 Rfe8 15 Nd3 g6 16 Nf4 Bg7

The light-squared bishop could have been retained by 16 ... h5, but Karpov did not like the fact that after 17 h4 the pawn chains on the kingside would have lost their mobility, whereas on the queenside White would have retained some opportunities for pressure.



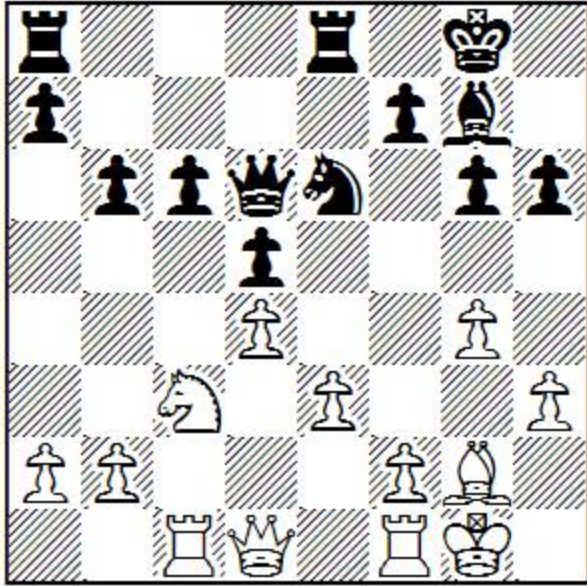
17 g4!

Sharp and at the same time forced: if Black were to succeed in placing his knight at f6, he would be able to begin advancing his g- and h-pawns.

17 ... Be6 18 h3 Nf8

18 ... Nf6 (Karpov) 19 Nxe6 Rxe6 also looks quite good, but Black does not want to block his bishop at g7.

19 Nxe6 (of course, ... Bd7 should not be allowed) **19 ... Nxe6**



Karpov does not like to spoil his pawn structure, although he points out that '19 ... fxe6 was interesting', potentially strengthening the mobility of the black pawn chain in the centre. White would have had to suppress the idea of ... e6-e5 with 20 f4, and his chances in the subsequent play would have been better: 20 ... Rac8 21 Ne2 c5 22 Qd2 cxd4 23 exd4 Nd7 24 Qd3.

20 Qd3 Rad8

'Since there is no prospect of advancing ... c6-c5, there is nothing for the rook to do at d8. Black should have thought about playing his queen to the kingside (... Qe7-h4) and attacking the advanced white pawns by ... h6-h5 or ... f7-f5.' (Karpov)

21 Rc2 Nc7 22 Na4

Doubling rooks – 22 Rfc1 would not have prevented Black from freeing himself: 22 ... c5! 23 dxc5 bxc5 24 Nb5 Nxb5 25 Qxb5 d4!

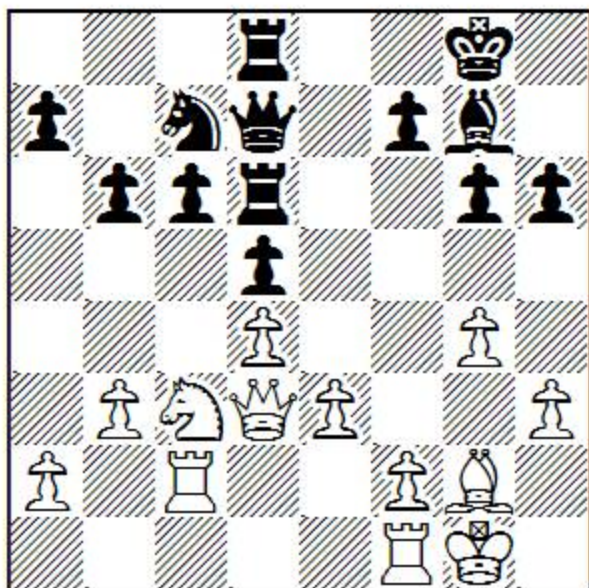
22 ... Qd7 23 b3 Re6

Black continues to play without a clear plan, directing his rook to d6, where it will occupy a passive position. '23 ... Nb5 with the idea of ... Nd6 came into consideration' (Karpov), not fearing the pressure of the white rooks on the c6-pawn.

24 Nc3 Rd6

Again a questionable decision, allowing White to begin active play. After 24 ... Bf8 (Karpov: 'preventing b3-b4') it would have been far

more difficult to play this.



25 b4! Bf8 26 Ne2 b5

The outpost at c4 is now more important for Black than control of c5.

27 Qb3!

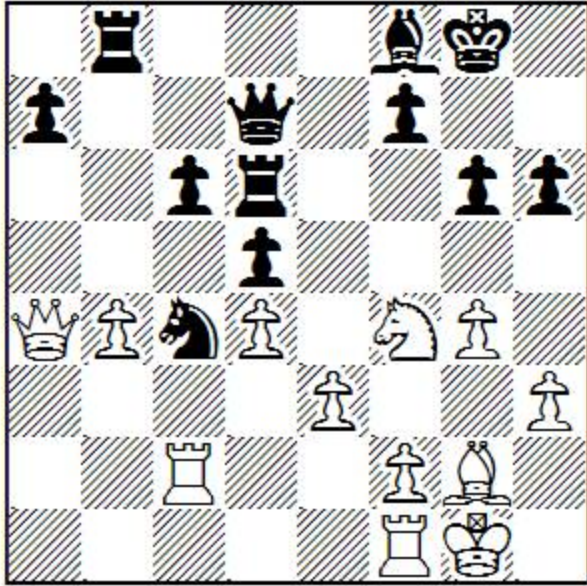
A move which solves two important problems: the route Ne2-c1-d3-c5 is vacated for the knight and the undermining move a2-a4 is prepared.

27 ... Na8 28 a4! bxa4

It is not possible to obtain a comfortable post at c4: 28 ... Nb6 29 axb5 cxb5 30 Nf4 Nc4 31 Ra1 a6 32 Rca2 Qb7 33 Nd3 Re6 34 Nc5 Bxc5 35 dxc5 with an obvious advantage. And 'if 28 ... a6 there follows 29 a5, and the knight turns out to be offside.' (Karpov)

29 Qxa4 Nb6 30 Qb3 Rb8 31 Nf4 Nc4 32 Qa4

The immediate exchange sacrifice 32 Rxc4 dxc4 33 Qxc4 promised little in view of the weakness of the b4-pawn: after 33 ... Rb6 34 Ra1 Qb7 35 Nd3 Rd8 36 Be4 Kg7 37 Ra4 Rb8 Black should be able to hold on. Korchnoi does not hurry to force events, but continues to strengthen his position.



32 ... f5

True to his playing manner, on the threshold of time-trouble Karpov sharpens the play at the cost of weakening his own king. Nevertheless, it would have been safer first to exchange the a7- and b4-pawns: 32 ... Rb5 33 Ra2 a5 34 bxa5 Rxa5 35 Qc2 Rxa2 36 Qxa2 f5 (Karpov) 37 gxf5 Qxf5, although even here Black still has to demonstrate equality after 38 Qb1.

33 gxf5 Qxf5 34 Qxa7 Rxb4 35 Ra2 Qc8 36 Rc1 Rb7 37 Qa4

Karpov was more afraid of 37 Qa6, thinking the pin to be rather unpleasant. However, after the simple 37 ... Qd7 38 Bf1 c5 39 Qa4 cxd4! (39 ... Qxa4? 40 Rxa4 cxd4 41 Bg2!) Black defends: 40 Qxd7 Rbxd7 41 exd4 Nb6.

37 ... Rf7 38 Rxc4!

With his flag about to fall, White sacrifices the exchange. True, he is not risking anything, since his subsequent moves are clear.

38 ... dxc4 39 Qxc4 Qf5 40 Nd3 Bg7

As the course of the resumption showed, the analysis of the Karpov brigade was deeper.

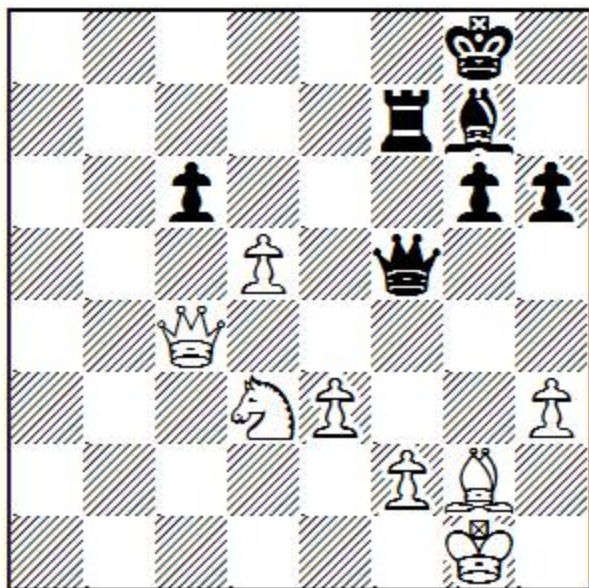
41 ... Rdf6!

'The endgame after 41 ... Qe6 42 Qxe6 Rxe6 43 Ra6 is very unpleasant in view of the threat of d4-d5.' (Karpov)

42 Rxf7

After 42 Rb7 the best defence is offered by 42 ... Bf8! (42 ... Kh7?? 43 e4!) 43 Rxf7 Rxf7 44 Ne5 Qxf2+ 45 Kh1 Bd6 46 Nxf7 Qxf7 47 Qxc6 Qc7!, and 'after the exchange of queens the endgame with opposite-coloured bishops is drawn' (Karpov). But White has a possibility of retaining the queens – 48 Qa8+ Kg7 49 Qa1. Now after 49 ... g5 the exchange of queens and a draw results from 50 e4 Bf4 51 e5 Qc1+ 52 Qxc1 Bxc1 53 d5 Bb2 54 e6 Ba3, but 50 Be4 leaves White some chances of success.

42 ... Rxf7 43 d5



43 ... Be5!

Excellent! The bishop is ideally placed on the b8-h2 diagonal, where it is not only blocking the pawn, but also eying the white king. 'And the exchange of the bishop (44 Nxe5 Qxe5) would have made things easier for Black' (Karpov). According to the champion, this key move was suggested by Baturinsky, the leader of the Soviet delegation (who was a solid candidate master).

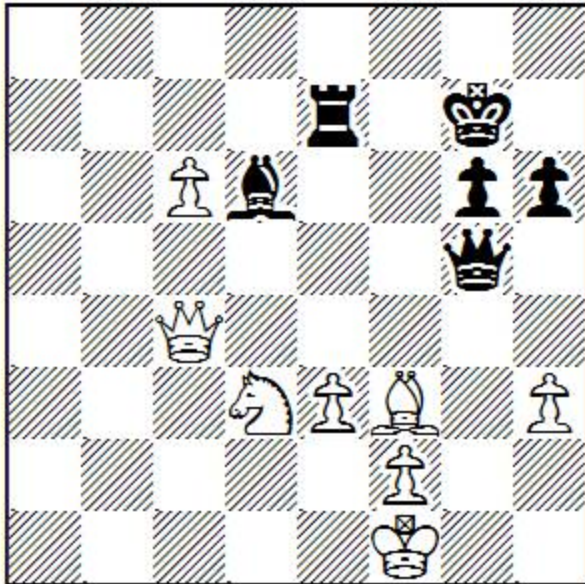
44 dxc6

Paired with its colleague on the e-file, the passed d-pawn would have been hard to stop, but the separated e- and c-pawns do not present any danger.

44 ... Kg7 45 Be4

Here Korchnoi was again in time-trouble: the manoeuvre 43 ... Be5 obviously came as a surprise to him. However, White's position, if he is still dreaming of winning, is not so easy to strengthen. The advance of the pawns weakens his own king. Thus after 45 e4 Qh5 the threat of ... Qe2 forces 46 Nxe5 Qxe5. And if 45 f4 Bc7 46 e4 there is the strong manoeuvre 46 ... Qa5, forcing White to act cautiously: if 47 Qd4+ Kh7 48 Kh2, then 48 ... g5!

45 ... Qg5+ 46 Kf1 Bd6 47 Bd5 Re7 48 Bf3



48 ... h5

Tal approves of this move, 'just in case' depriving the white bishop of the g4-square and expanding the king's shelter. The less ambitious 48 ... Qf6 would also not have left White any particular chances of success – both in the endgame after 49 Qd4 Qxd4 50 exd4 Kf8 51 Nb2 (51 Bg4 Ke8 and ... Kd8) 51 ... Re6 52 Nc4 Ke7, and in the event of 49 Nf4 (49 Be4 Qe6!?) 49 ... Bxf4 50 exf4 Qd6.

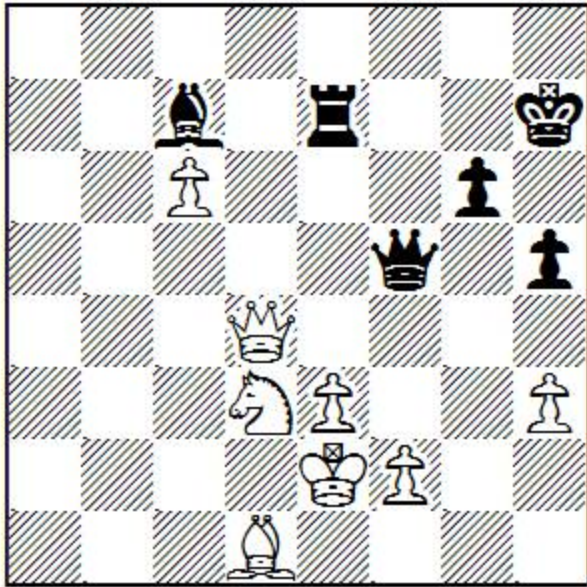
49 Bd1

In severe time-trouble Korchnoi does not want to take any radical decisions and only after the 56th move does he intend to weigh up the possibilities of playing for a win. The exchange of queens 49 Qd4+ Qf6 50 Qxf6+ Kxf6 would have led to an equal endgame, for example: 51 h4 Ra7 52 Bd5 Ra5 53 e4 g5!

49 ... Qf5 50 Ke2 Re4 51 Qc3+ Qf6 (51 ... Kh7? was dangerous: 52 c7 Re8 53 Bc2!) 52 Qb3

Again avoiding the exchange of queens, which would be equivalent to a draw offer: 52 Qxf6+ Kxf6 53 Bb3, and if 53 ... Rh4, then 54 f4 Rxh3 55 Nf2 Rh4(2) 56 Kf3 with the threat of Kg3.

52 ... Qf5 53 Qb7+ (again avoiding 53 Qc3+ Qf6 54 Qxf6+; Korchnoi wants to enter the new time control with the queens on – he is still hoping to win!) 53 ... Re7 54 Qb2+ Kh7 55 Qd4 Bc7



56 Qh4??

With his last move before the time control White blunders, removing his queen to the edge of the board. The cool-headed 56 Qc5, although it would have allowed the exchange of queens – 56 ... Qxc5 (after 56 ... Qf6 57 Bb3 Korchnoi would have achieved his aim – a complicated position with the queens on) 57 Nxc5 etc. would have allowed him to play on with the draw in hand.

56 ... Re4! 57 f4 (to save the queen, this pawn has to be advanced at the most inappropriate moment) 57 ... Bb6! 58 Bc2 Rxe3+ 59 Kd2 Qa5+ 60 Kd1

Qa1+ 61 Kd2 Re4 0-1

There was one of Korchnoi's Filipino tragedies (along with the 5th and 17th games). It was amazingly impractical: to think over the sealed move for 40 minutes, and then take a time-out ... Oleg Skuratov, a friend from his youth, wrote: 'Viktor never spared himself, never husbanded his strength. This extravagance reverberated especially strongly in Baguio. Seeing his fatal oversights, I involuntarily remembered Korchnoi the student, playing blitz games for days on end. Carried away by the play, he did not think about the consequences of such stress.' Karpov too used to be carried away by blitz, but in his case one should rather talk about the consequences of the stress of playing protracted matches.

In the 14th game the champion's staff finally found the key to a variation in which the challenger had gained two draws at the start of the match. Karpov: 'I conducted this game in my best traditions.' On encountering another novelty, Korchnoi held on with all his might, but close to the 30th move he cracked under the burden of an exhausting, laborious defence.

Game 75

A.Karpov-V.Korchnoi

World Championship Match, Baguio 1978, 14th game

Ruy Lopez C82

1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bb5 a6 4 Ba4 Nf6 5 0-0 Nxe4 6 d4 b5 7 Bb3 d5 8 dxe5 Be6 9 c3 (9 Nbd2 – Game Nos.85 and 86) 9 ... Bc5 10 Nbd2 0-0 11 Bc2 Bf5 12 Nb3 Bg4

Three years later in Merano, Korchnoi successfully tried 12 ... Bg6! (*Game No.35*).

13 h3!?

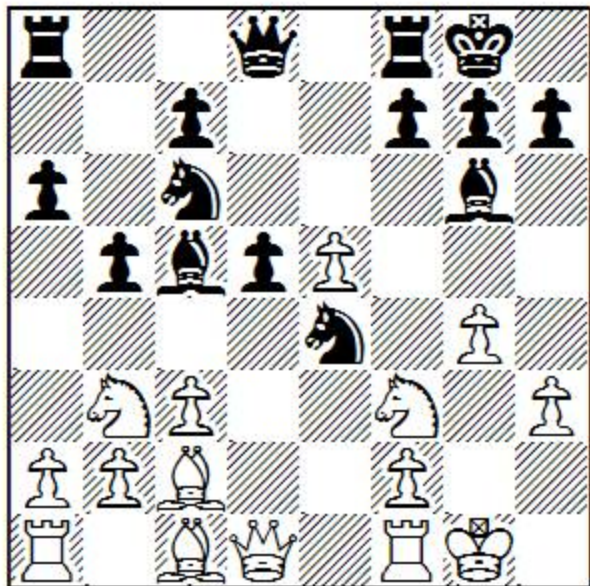
A surprise! The usual unpretentious play for the advantage of the two bishops – 13 Nxc5 Nxc5 14 Re1, as in Bronstein-Flohr (USSR Championship 1944), Euwe-Eliskases (Mar del Plata 1947) and Fischer-Larsen (Santa Monica 1966), did not bring White any dividends in the 2nd and 4th games here.

13 ... Bh5

Karpov merely mentioned the sharper move 13 ... Bxf3, while Tal called it not unfavourable for White. Indeed, it is hard to decide, the more so without special analysis, on the unclear play after 14 gxf3 (14 Qxf3?! Nxe5 Navarro-I.Ivanov, Cienfuegos 1980) 14 ... Nxf2 15 Rxf2

Bxf2+ 16 Kxf2 Nxe5 or 16 ... Qh4+ 17 Kg2 Nxe5 – the white bishops may have their say!

14 g4! Bg6



This position was considered quite acceptable for Black, but the champion's staff had prepared a new idea, which struck the 12 ... Bg4 variation a serious blow.

15 Bxe4!

'It occurred to me that it is possible to go by force into an endgame, where the presence of opposite-coloured bishops does not diminish, but even increases White's advantage.' (Karpov)

15 ... dxe4 16 Nxc5 exf3 17 Bf4!

The basis of White's idea. Karpov does not miss the opportunity to gain another small plus: to save his f3-pawn, Black himself is forced to exchange queens – and to present his opponent with an extra tempo.

17 ... Qxd1

'After 17 ... Qe7 White gains a tempo by 18 Qd5 Na5 19 b4 Nc4 20 Rfe1, and the f3-pawn is lost.' (Karpov): 20 ... a5! 21 a3! etc.

18 Raxd1 Nd8!

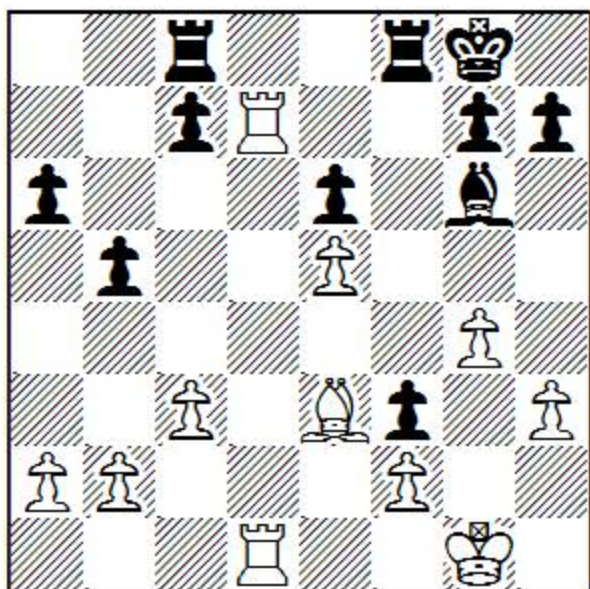
The best defence. Black exchanges the strong knight at c5 and creates a strong point in the centre for his bishop, thereby retaining his f3-pawn. Korchnoi even allows the enemy rook onto the 7th rank, as he sees how it will be possible to drive it out from there.

19 Rd7 Ne6 20 Nxe6 fxe6 21 Be3 (Karpov reached this position at home)

21 ... Rac8

The exchange of one pair of rooks after 21 ... Rf7?! 22 Rfd1 (Karpov) 22 ... Raf8 23 Bc5 Rxd7 24 Rxd7 Rc8 25 Kh2 Be4 26 Kg3 Bd5 27 h4 would have allowed White real winning chances.

22 Rfd1



22 ... Be4!

At just the right time. Delaying with 22 ... h5?! would have conceded the 7th rank to White: 23 gxh5 Bxh5 24 Re7 and Rdd7 (Karpov).

23 Bc5!

Forcing the rook to leave the f-file and take up a passive position; but the white rook too is forced to retreat, and this is an undoubted achievement for Black.

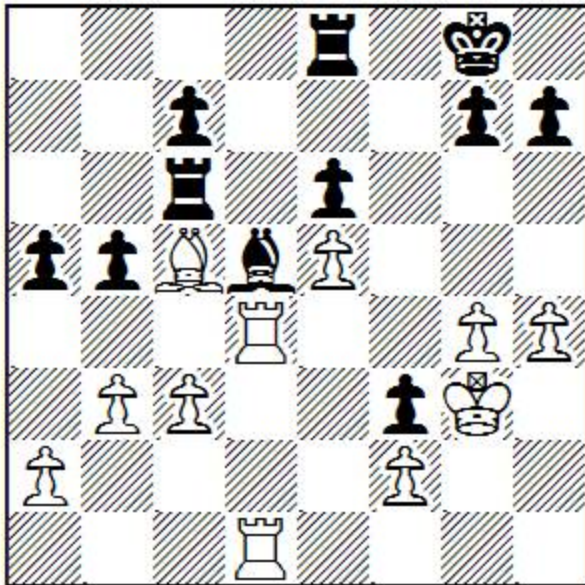
23 ... Rfe8 24 R7d4 (after 24 Kh2 Bc6 the rook would have been driven from d7) 24 ... Bd5 25 b3 a5 26 Kh2 Ra8 27 Kg3 Ra6

After achieving success in setting up a defence, Korchnoi relaxed and decided to try and prevent c3-c4 by simple means. He avoided the more tenacious 27 ... a4 28 c4 bxc4 29 bxc4 Bc6, possibly not noticing that if 30 a3 there is the strong reply 30 ... Ra5! Karpov asserts that even without 30 a3 'White has an obvious positional advantage', but it would have merely consisted in complete domination of the d-file, on

which there are no invasion squares. White would then have had to try and open a second front on the kingside ...

28 h4 Rc6?

A serious error. It was not yet too late to play 28 ... a4, but Korchnoi is carried away by the faulty idea of transferring his rook and he does not sense the danger.



29 Rxd5!

In the event of the 'obvious' 20 b4 Black would hardly have been in danger of losing. With this unexpected exchange sacrifice Karpov discloses the flaw in Korchnoi's plan, exploiting the fact that for the moment the enemy rooks lack coordination. Black is again inundated with problems.

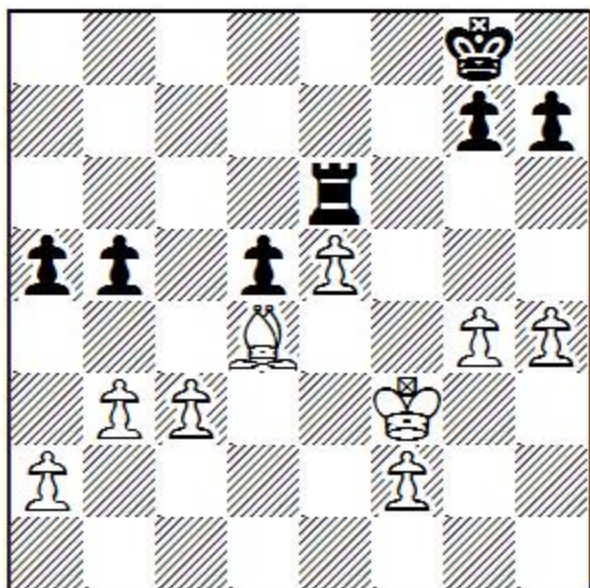
29 ... exd5 30 Rxd5 Rce6 31 Bd4 c6 32 Rc5

Just three moves have passed, but how strikingly the situation on the board has changed! Black's rooks are passively placed, his queenside pawns are obvious targets, and the f3-pawn is altogether doomed. If the white pawn phalanx should begin advancing, Black will be unable to hold out.

32 ... Rf8?

Now the game cannot be saved. Black's defensive resources were far from exhausted, and in the first instance he should have exchanged rooks: 32 ... Rd8! 33 Kxf3 Rd5 34 Rxd5 cxd5. In this case White's task

would have been seriously complicated, and perhaps it would have become altogether unrealisable!



Analysis diagram

If White moves his king, preparing to advance the f-pawn, Black finds very convincing counterplay:

1) 35 Kg3 b4! 36 f4 Rc6! 37 cxb4 axb4 38 f5 Rc2 39 e6 Rxa2 40 Kf3 (in the event of 40 g5? Re2! with the threat of ... g7-g6 White is in danger of losing: 41 Bc5 Re4 42 e7 g6 43 fxg6 hxg6 44 Bxb4 Kf7, and the black d-pawn comes into the action) 40 ... Ra3 41 Kf4 Rxb3 42 g5 Rh3 43 Bc5 Rxh4+ 44 Ke5 b3 (after 44 ... Rg4 45 Kd6 the g5-pawn cannot be taken, but 45 ... b3 still saves Black) 45 f6 Re4+ (not 45 ... gxf6+? 46 gxf6 Re4+ on account of 47 Kf5! and wins) 46 Kxd5 gxf6! 47 gxf6 (after 47 Kxe4? b2 the new queen appears with check!) 47 ... Rf4, and the draw is obvious;

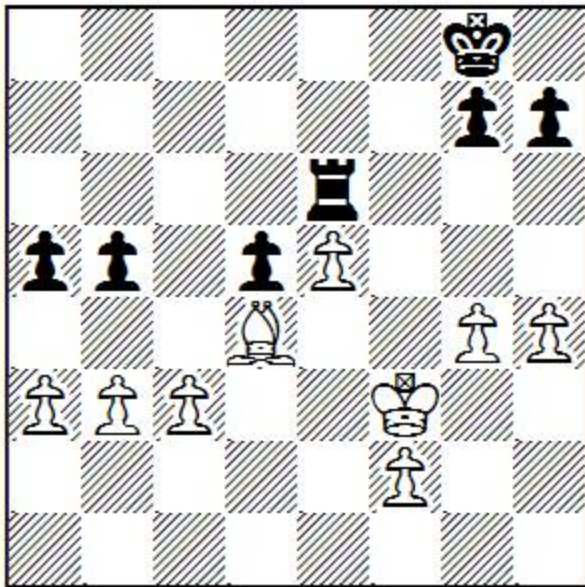
2) 35 Ke3 h5! 36 gxh5 (36 f3 is harmless: 36 ... hxg4 37 fxg4 b4! 38 h5 Rc6 39 Kd3 Kf7) 36 ... Rh6 37 Kf4 Rxh5 38 Kg4 g6! 39 a4! (winning the a5-pawn is White's only chance) 39 ... bxa4 40 bxa4 Kf7 41 f4 Ke6 42 Bb6 Rh8 43 Kg5 (after 43 Bxa5 Ra8 44 Bb6 Rxa4 45 Kg5 Ra2 46 Kxg6 Rg2+ White's king is pushed back to the edge of the board, which deprives him of any chances) 43 ... Rh5+! (43 ... Kf7?! is passive: 44 Bxa5! Ra8 45 Bb4 Rxa4 46 e6+! Kxe6 47 Kxg6, but even here, by playing 47 ... d4 48 f5+ Kd7! – the only move: 48 ... Kd5? 49 f6

d3 50 c4+! Kxc4 51 f7 Ra8 52 Bd2 etc. – 49 f6 d3, after the appearance of the new queens it would appear that Black is not losing) 44 Kxg6 Rxh4 45 f5+ Kxe5 46 Bc7+ Ke4 47 f6 Rg4+ 48 Kh5 Rg1 49 f7 Rf1 50 Kg6 d4 with a draw, since the a-pawn's promotion square is not controlled by the bishop.

However, White can forestall the counterplay with ... h7-h5 (by 35 h5) or with ... b5-b4 (35 a3). Thus:

3) 35 h5 b4! (35 ... Rc6 36 Ke3 or 36 a3! leads to variations already examined; the mechanical forestalling of the advance is less good – 35 ... g5 36 hxg6 hxg6 37 Ke3 g5 38 f4! gxf4+ 39 Kxf4 Kf7 40 Kf5 Rc6, and after 41 a3 it transpires that manoeuvring the rook between c6, e6 and g6 does not give a draw, for example: 41 ... a4 42 bxa4 bxa4 43 g5 Re6 44 Bc5, and after 44 ... Rc6 there follows 45 Bd6!, while if 44 ... Rg6 – 45 Be7!, then Bf6, and White's passed pawns begin advancing) 36 Ke3 Rc6! 37 Kd3 (in the event of 37 cxb4 axb4 38 f4 Ra6 things are simpler for Black) 37 ... g6! 38 hxg6 Rxg6 39 f3 Kf7 40 cxb4 axb4 41 Bc5 Ra6, achieving saving counterplay after both 42 Kd4 Rxa2 43 Kxd5 Rd2+ 44 Bd4 Rd3 45 f4 Rxb3 46 e6+ Ke8 47 f5 Rd3 48 Ke4 Rg3 49 Kf4 Rd3, and 42 Bxb4 Rxa2 43 Bd6 Rf2 44 Ke3 Rf1 45 b4 d4+ 46 Kxd4 Rxf3 47 b5 Ke6 48 b6 Rb3;

4) 35 a3!



Analysis diagram

This is how Karpov 'was intending to continue, in order to create a fortress on the queenside by b3-b4 and only then advance the kingside pawns.' This gives the greatest chances of success: White hinders the activation of the rook and plans Kg3 and f2-f4. Here 35 ... h5? is a pawn sacrifice, which Black cannot permit himself: 36 gxh5 Re8 37 Kg4 (37 b4!?) 37 ... b4 38 axb4 axb4 39 cxb4 Rb8 40 Bc5 d4 41 Kf4, and White should win. And passive defence by 35 ... g6? is gradually breached after 36 Kg3: Karpov gives only the hopeless 36 ... Re8? 37 f4 Rf8 38 e6 (38 h5! is even better), but 36 ... h5 also does not help – 37 f4 hxg4 38 Kxg4 Kf7 39 Kg5 (not 39 h5? gxh5+ 40 Kxh5 Rg6 41 f5 Rg2, and with his king cut off, White cannot win) 39 ... Re8 40 f5 gxf5 41 Kxf5 Re6 42 Be3 Rc6 43 Bd2 (the h-pawn is ready to advance, and Black's counterplay is too late) 43 ... b4 44 axb4 axb4 45 cxb4 Rc2 46 e6+ etc.

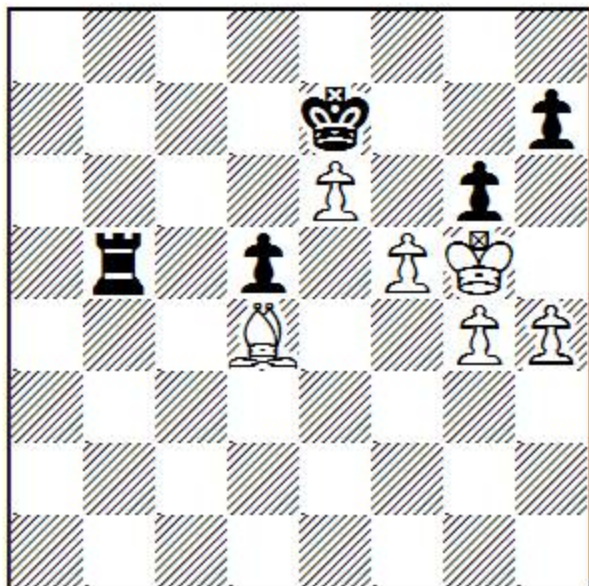
Therefore Black must aim for the immediate activation of his rook – 35 ... Rc6!, and in the event of 36 Kg3 b4! 37 axb4 axb4 38 cxb4 Rc1 39 e6 Re1 40 Be3 (or 40 b5 Rxe6 41 b6 Re7 42 f4 g6) 40 ... Kf8 41 Kf4 Ke7 42 Ke5 d4 43 Kxd4 Kxe6 it would appear that he gains a draw.

White can radically suppress the idea of ... b5-b4 by 36 b4 ('à la Karpov'), but then the a-file is opened for the rook: 36 ... axb4 37 axb4 Kf7 38 Kg3 Ke6 39 f4 g6 40 h5 Ra6 41 Kh4 Ra2 42 Kg5 Rg2 with equality. Instead of 38 Kg3 it is stronger to play 38 Kf4!, and after 38 ... Ke6 39 Kg5! or 38 ... Ra6 39 Kf5! g6+ 40 Kg5 Ra1 41 f4 Rf1 42 f5 gxf5 (42 ... h6+ 43 Kxh6 gxf5 44 g5!) 43 gxf5 h6+ 44 Kg4 things are clearly bad for Black. But here too he finds a reply: 38 ... h6! 39 h5 g6 40 hxg6+ Rxg6, and since if 41 Kf5 there is 41 ... Rg5+, if 41 Kg3 – 41 ... h5 and if 41 f3 – 41 ... Ke6, White has to be satisfied with a draw.

Now, in search of a win, the following line very much suggests itself: 36 Kf4 Kf7 37 Kf5, and after 37 ... h6? 38 h5 followed by f2-f4 Black most probably is unable to hold out. He must play energetically: 37 ... g6+ 38 Kg5 b4! 39 axb4 axb4 40 cxb4 Rc1 41 f4 Rd1! (41 ... Rf1? 42 h5 h6+ 43 Kxh6 gxh5 44 f5! hxg4 45 e6+ Ke7 46 Kg6, and the white pawns are irresistible) 42 Bc5 d4 43 f5 gxf5 44 gxf5 h6+! (not immediately 44 ... d3? on account of 45 e6+ Kg8 46 f6) 45 Kf4 (45 Kxh6? d3, and it is Black who wins) 45 ... d3 46 e6+ Ke8 47 Ke3 d2, and in view of the exchange of the d2-pawn for one of the connected passed pawns, it is a draw.

A more refined version of the same plan is 41 b5!? (instead of 41 f4). By forcing the opponent to deal with the b-pawn, White in the

meantime hopes to achieve more on the opposite wing: 41 ... Rb1 42 f4 Rxb3 43 f5 (43 b6 Rb4) 43 ... Rxb5 44 e6+ Ke7.



Analysis diagram

Going for the h7-pawn – 45 Kh6 leads to the isolation of the king: 45 ... gxf5 46 gxf5 Rb3 47 Kxh7 (47 Kg5 Rb5 is roughly the same as 45 h5) 47 ... Rg3 with a draw. 45 h5 is more interesting: 45 ... gxf5 46 gxf5 Ra5 (the c5-square has to be guarded) 47 Bf6+ (after 47 Kh6 Ra4 48 Bc5+ Kf6 49 Kxh7 d4 it is White who has to try and draw) 47 ... Ke8 48 Bg7 Ke7 (a natural move, but 48 ... d4! is technically more accurate, since after 49 Bxd4 the rook will keep the f5-pawn under fire, and White will be unable to win, even after penetrating with his king to f6) 49 Bd4 Rb5 50 Kh6 (the optimal moment for the attack on the h7-pawn) 50 ... Rb3 51 Kxh7 Rg3! (not 51 ... Rf3? 52 Bc5+ Kf6 53 Kg8!) 52 h6 (the difference compared with the 45 Kh6 variation is that the h-pawn is more advanced, but this is not decisive) 52 ... Rg5 53 Bg7 d4 54 f6+ Kxe6 55 Kg8 d3 56 f7 Rf5 57 h7 d2 58 h8Q d1Q 59 Qh6+ Kd7 60 Bf6 Qg4+ 61 Qg7 Qc4, and the draw, evidently, cannot be avoided.

The only try that remains is 36 h5 Kf7 37 Kg3 – after this Black replies with the typical 37 ... b4! (37 ... Ke6 38 f4 g6 39 Kh4 is less good) 38 axb4 axb4 39 cxb4 Rc1 40 f4 Rb1! (40 ... Rd1 41 Bc5 Rd3+ 42 Kh4 is dubious, for example: 42 ... Rxb3 – 42 ... Ke6!? – 43 f5 h6 44 e6+ Ke8 45 g5! hxg5+ 46 Kg4! Rb1 47 h6! gxh6 48 f6 and wins) 41 f5

Rxb3+ 42 Kf4 Rxb4 43 e6+ Kg8 44 Ke5 h6 45 Kxd5 Ra4! (after 45 ... Rb8? 46 Bc5 Rd8+ 47 Kc6 the king gives decisive support to the imminent pawn breakthrough: 47 ... Rd1 48 Bd6 Ra1 49 Kd7 Ra7+ 50 Bc7 Ra8 51 g5! hxg5 52 h6 g4 53 hxg7 Kxg7 54 Be5+ etc.), and if 46 g5 hxg5 47 h6 gxh6 48 f6, then, 'in the opinion' of the computer, Black forces a draw by 48 ... Rxd4+! 49 Kxd4 g4 50 Ke5 g3 51 f7+ Kg7 52 Kd6 g2 53 Ke7 g1Q 54 f8Q+ Kh7. In a practical game, of course, a number of accurate moves would still be demanded of Black in this final position.

It stands to reason that this fascinating endgame contains many more subtleties. But in any case there is no doubt that 32 ... Rf8? was a decisive mistake by Korchnoi, allowing White to take the game into a purely technical stage.

33 a4!

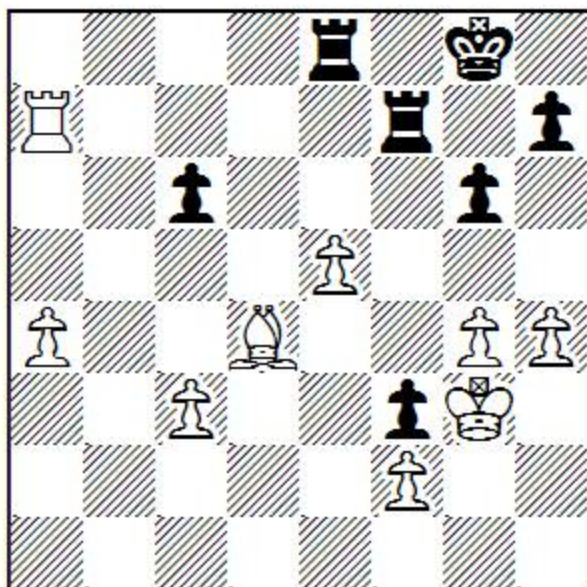
Karpov breaks up the opponent's pawn pair, condemning Black's rooks to the defence of his weak pawn islands.

33 ... bxa4 34 bxa4 g6 35 Rxa5 Ree8

35 ... h5 can now be disregarded by White: 36 Rc5! hxg4 37 a5 Rd8 38 Kxg4 Rd5 39 Rxd5 cxd5 40 Kxf3 and wins.

36 Ra7 (this effectively concludes the game) **36 ... Rf7**

White need not fear the exchange 36 ... Ra8 37 a5 Rxa7 38 Bxa7: too many of his pawns dream of becoming a queen.



37 Ra6! (again denying the black rooks any hopes of activity) 37 ... Rc7
38 Bc5 Rcc8 39 Bd6 Ra8 40 Rxc6 Rxa4 41 Kxf3 h5 42 gxh5

The sealed move. The three pawns for the exchange, plus active pieces, do not leave the opponent any chances of saving the game, especially after adjournment analysis.

On the day for adjournments, first the challenger unexpectedly lost the 13th game (see above). 'Korchnoi was shocked,' Karpov recalls. 'After all, within half an hour he faced a second resumption – and a second successive defeat ... I thought that he wouldn't turn up for this resumption, but he arrived, probably in order to demonstrate that he could calmly accept this blow of fate. He even smiled. I can imagine what this smile must have cost him.'

42 ... gxh5 43 c4 Ra2 44 Rb6 Kf7 45 c5 Ra4 46 c6 Ke6 47 c7 Kd7 48 Rb8 Rc8 49
Ke3! Rxh4 50 e6+! 1-0

Black resigned: 50 ... Kxd6 51 Rxc8 Rc4 52 Rd8+! Kxc7 53 e7 or
50 ... Kxe6 51 Bg3!

The score became 3-1 in the champion's favour. And he decided to 'let his rearguard catch up' and accustom himself to the new situation in the match: 'I did not force events, but continued playing as though nothing had happened, confident that the rising wave in me would sweep away the opponent with its logical strength. Which is what happened in the 17th game.'

To be fair, it should be mentioned that at the very start of this incredibly dramatic and entertaining game Korchnoi lost 11 minutes on his clock in the battle with Zukhar (cf. p.121) and then achieved a completely won position by energetic play. And that evening the 'rising wave' could have covered Karpov himself 'with its logical strength' ...

Before analysing this game let us try to understand what the Doctor of Medical Sciences Vladimir Petrovich Zukhar was doing in Baguio. After all, initially his task was merely to ensure that Karpov slept well and to give him psychological advice. Alexander Roshal recalls:

'Korchnoi has always been noted for his mistrustfulness, and he believed in parapsychology and all kinds of mysticism (later he even played a game with ... Maróczy's spirit). From the very start in Baguio, when Zukhar had not yet begun to enjoy himself, Viktor Lvovich complained: "They've brought a secret psychologist with them!" He must have remembered Zukhar from the Moscow match. In short, as soon as Korchnoi gave grounds for thinking that he was afraid of hypnosis, this was immediately exploited. We knew perfectly well that

Zukhar was no hypnotist, but we decided: if that's what the opponent wants, by all means! And the doctor himself became so carried away by his role, that he soon began to regard himself as virtually the main participant in the events. Before the games he did not have soup and did not drink water, so that he could then sit continuously for the full five hours at his "battle station" on the 4th row. I don't know exactly whether this was on Baturinsky's instructions or his own initiative.

'The ways that the challenger's team tried to combat our psychologist! Petra Leeuwerik sat herself directly in front of him, blocking his vision. Then Zukhar began asking us, Krylov or the "art critics in civilian clothes" (*KGB officials – G.K.*) to move Petra somewhere. Once she sat almost in his lap and Tal immediately commented: "Now he is Vladimir Petrovich!"

'Psychologists are strange people: when they are constantly talked about, they begin to believe in the exclusive importance of their mission. During one of the lengthy time-outs we were all invited to another reception, and a local compere announced: "Among our guests is Anatoly Karpov's team. Present here with them is the famous ... " He was probably intending to name Tal, who was well known even in the Philippines. But here, not allowing him to finish, Zukhar suddenly stood up and bowed ...

'Some time later from Korchnoi's camp they announced: "Well, just you wait: soon a person will arrive, and he'll hypnotise everyone." However, it did not prove very difficult for the Soviets to disarm our emigrant from Kharkov, this amateur "hypnotist", who, clearly, would undertake any work ... This was a psychological war. Initially we regarded it as a rather amusing game. I, for example, permitted myself a dubious joke about this "little Jew". But then these games acquired more threatening dimensions.'

... So, after winning the fierce battle to have Zukhar moved, the challenger finally made his first move, and promptly the champion emerged from his rest room.

Game 76

V.Korchnoi-A.Karpov

World Championship Match, Baguio 1978, 17th game

Nimzo-Indian Defence E47

1 c4 Nf6 2 Nc3 e6 3 d4 Bb4 4 e3 0-0 (avoiding 4 ... c5 5 Ne2!? *Game No.29*) 5 Bd3 c5 6 d5!?

Korchnoi called this new, sharp move 'an interesting idea of Yacob Murey'. Usually 6 Nf3 or 6 Ne2 was played.

6 ... b5!?

Black replies as in the 7th game, where 'this pawn sacrifice came as a surprise and proved fully justified from the practical point of view.' (Karpov)

7 dxe6 fxe6 (in Karpov's opinion, 7 ... bxc4 8 exf7+ Kh8 9 Bxc4 d5 is even better) 8 cxb5 a6!?

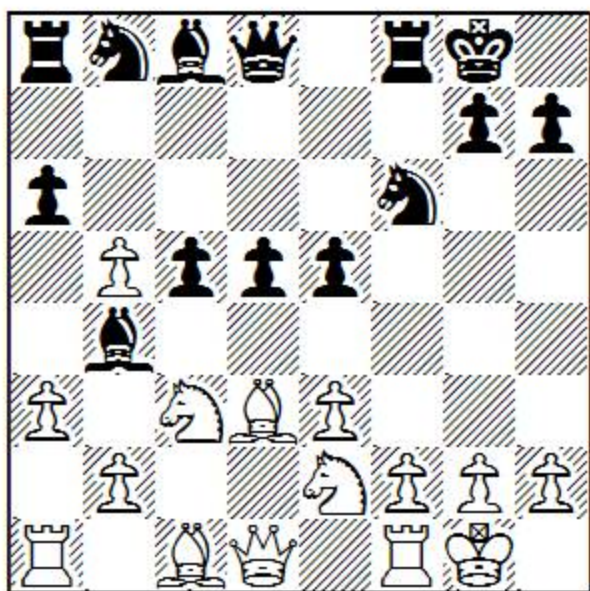
And this is a novelty. Apparently the champion was dissatisfied with the outcome of the opening in the 7th game, where he first set up a mobile pawn centre: 8 ... Bb7 9 Nf3 d5 10 0-0 Nbd7 11 Ne2! Qe8 12 Ng3 e5 (12 ... c4!? 13 Bc2 Nc5) 13 Bf5 g6 14 Bh3 a6?! 15 Ng5! axb5 (if 15 ... Ba5 or 15 ... Qe7, then 16 e4! is strong) 16 Ne6 c4 17 Bd2!, and White won the exchange, but ... not the game.

9 Ne2 d5 10 0-0 e5

10 ... axb5 11 Bxb5 Ba6 12 Bxa6 Nxa6 was possibly more promising, but as a matter of principle Karpov does not want for the moment to determine the position of his bishop.

11 a3

The first critical moment.



11 ... axb5?!

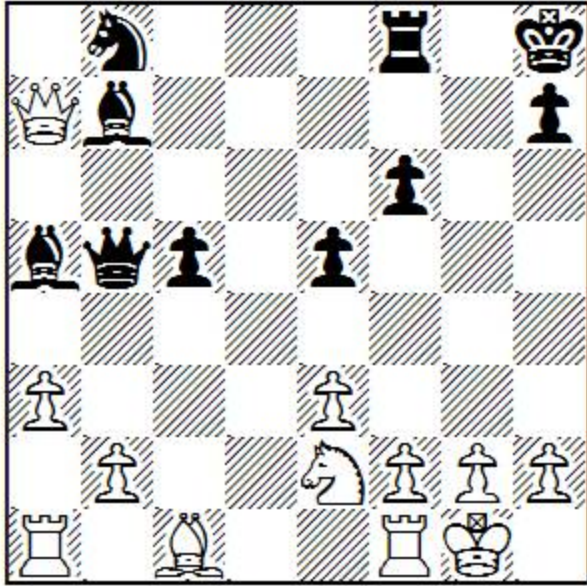
'It was better to choose between 11 ... Ba5 and 11 ... Bxc3.' (Tal). If 11 ... Ba5?! the counter-sacrifice 12 b4!, disclosing the weakness of the enemy centre, is good: 12 ... cxb4 13 axb4 Bxb4 14 Qb3 Bxc3 15 Nxc3 Bb7 16 e4! etc. But 11 ... Bxc3! (now, in order to exclude the reply 12 bxc3) could indeed have equalised: 12 Nxc3 c4 13 Be2 (13 Bc2 d4) 13 ... axb5 14 Nxb5 Ba6 15 Nc3 (15 Qa4 Nbd7 or 15 ... Nc6) 15 ... d4 16 exd4 exd4 17 Bf3 Ra7 18 Ne2 Rd7 with fine counterplay.

12 Bxb5 Bxc3

A difficult choice. It sometimes happens that in analysis you come to one conclusion, but during a game you begin to have doubts, and new variations creep into your mind. You change the planned course, and afterwards you reproach yourself: 'What have I done?' That was the case here: it was recommended to Karpov that he should retain the bishop, but thinking at the board led him in a different direction. Why?

'If 12 ... Be6 there is the unpleasant reply 13 Na4, while 12 ... c4 does not work in view of 13 e4, and Black's position collapses. In the event of 12 ... Ba5 (Tal) White plays 13 Bd2, creating the threat of b2-b4, after which the opening of the a-file is now in favour of White' (Karpov). For example: 13 ... Ba6 14 b4! cxb4 15 axb4 Bxb4 16 Qb3 Bc5 17 Rfd1 or 17 Rfc1, and Black's hanging centre is on the point of collapse.

As for 12 ... Qb6, Karpov rejected this because of 13 Bd3 c4? 14 Nxd5, although after 13 ... Bxc3 14 Nxc3 Be6! Black would have gained compensation for the pawn, while 14 bxc3 would not have been so favourable for White as in the game. In fact 12 ... Qb6? would have been refuted combinatorically, which the champion also saw, but ... not to the end: 13 Nxd5! Qxb5 14 Nxf6+ gxf6 15 Qd5+ Kh8 16 Qxa8 Bb7 17 Qa7 Ba5!

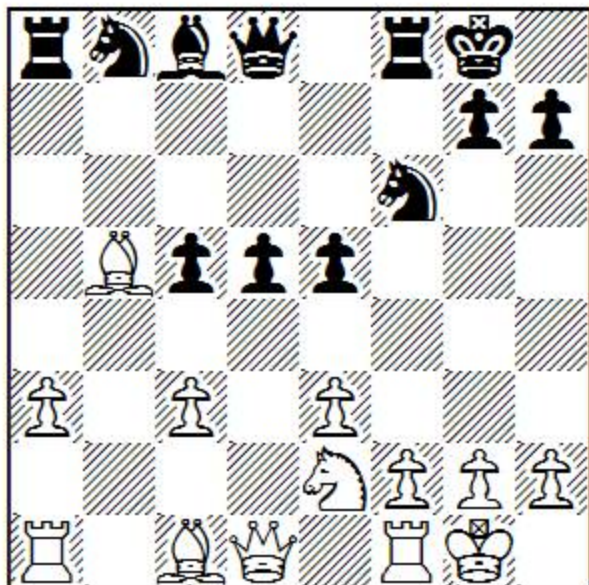


Analysis diagram

And here, instead of the pretty variation given by Karpov – 18 Nc3 Bxc3 19 bxc3 Bxg2! 20 Kxg2 Rg8+ or 18 a4 Qc6 19 f3 Bb6 and wins, there is 18 b4!, sharply changing the evaluation of the position: 18 ... Qc6? 19 f3 Bb6 does not work because of 20 b5!, while in the event of 18 ... cxb4 19 axb4 Bxg2 20 Qc5! Qxc5 21 bxc5 Bxf1 22 Kxf1 Nc6 (22 ... Bb4 23 Ba3) 23 e4 or 18 ... Nd7 19 Nc3! Qc6 20 e4 Ra8 21 Qxa8 Bxa8 22 bxa5 White should be able to convert his material advantage.

13 bxc3!

Karpov does not like pawn defects and so, even in calculations 'for his opponent', he clearly underestimated this capture with the pawn. Now Black's pawn trio loses its mobility and he has to seek some other compensation for the sacrificed pawn. But this is not easy, since he has no lead in development and the bishop at b5 paralyses his counterplay on the queenside.



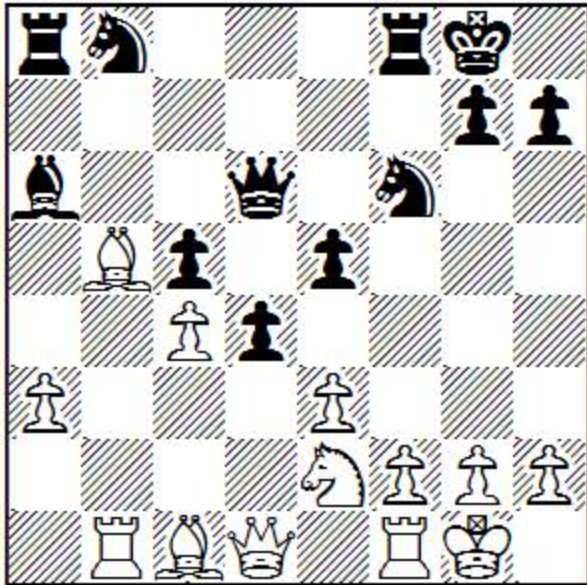
13 ... Ba6?!

Black agrees to the exchange of the light-squared bishops, reckoning that White's other bishop will be cramped and that it will somehow be possible to exploit this. '13 ... Bb7 was possibly better', but not 13 ... c4?! 14 a4 Ba6 15 Ba3 Rf7 16 f4! Qb6 (Karpov) 17 Qd2! with an obvious advantage to White.

14 Rb1 Qd6

'If 14 ... Nbd7, then 15 e4 Bxb5 16 Rxb5 followed by a3-a4, Ba3 and f2-f4.' (Karpov). In addition, Black would have had to reckon with 15 Bc6!?

15 c4 d4



16 Ng3!

The immediate 16 f4 looked tempting. After this Karpov was intending to reply 16 ... Nc6, not seeing that after 17 fxe5 Nxe5 18 exd4 Nxc4 19 Qd3! Black would stand badly: 19 ... Ne5 20 Bf4 Nxd3 21 Bxd6 Rfc8 22 a4 c4 23 Nc3 etc. '16 ... Bb7 probably came into consideration', although this too favours White: 17 fxe5 Qxe5 18 Ng3 Nc6 (18 ... dxe3 19 Rb3) 19 Ba4! etc.

There only remains 16 ... d3! According to Karpov, after 17 Ng3 exf4 (? – G.K.) 18 Rxf4 'White has some advantage'. But in my opinion he has practically a winning position: 18 ... Rd8 19 Nf5! Qe6 20 Bxa6 Nxa6 21 Nxg7!, or 18 ... Bxb5 19 Rxb5 Nc6 (19 ... g6 20 Rb3) 20 Nf5 etc. Of course, 17 ... e4 is essential. Or 17 Nc3 e4, and if 18 g4, then 18 ... c4! with a complicated game.

16 ... Nc6 17 a4!

After the 'greedy' 17 Nf5 Qe6 18 Bxc6 Qxf5 19 e4! (19 Bxa8? Qxb1 Karpov) 19 ... Qe6! 20 Bxa8 Rxa8 and 21 ... Bxc4 Black's pair of connected passed pawns could well have compensated for the exchange deficit.

17 ... Na5?

A significant loss of time. 'The planned play against the c4-pawn does not succeed. Possibly the bishop should have been withdrawn –

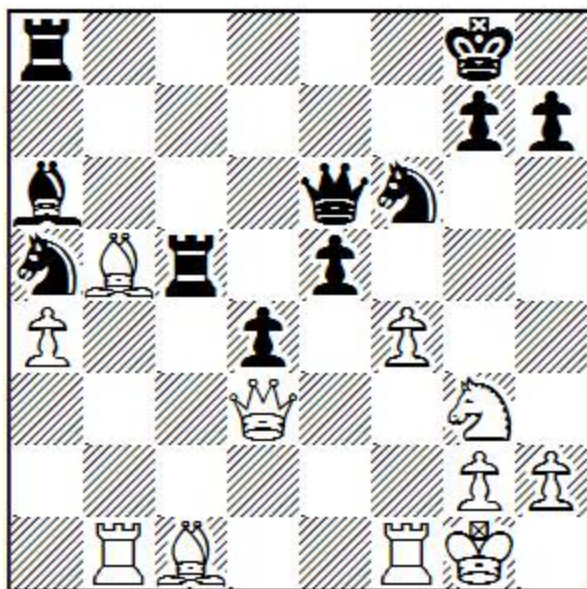
17 ... Bb7.' (Karpov). This too would not have promised Black an easy life, but at any event some playing intrigue would have been retained.

18 Qd3 Qe6 19 exd4! cxd4 (19 ... exd4 20 Ba3 or 19 ... Bxb5 20 cxb5 exd4 21 Bg5 is also unsatisfactory) 20 c5 Rfc8 21 f4!

This destroys Black's hopes for his central pawns. Now White adds a powerful initiative to his material advantage.

21 ... Rxc5

'It is obvious that I have lost the strategic battle. All that remains is to rely on my resourcefulness in defence and to seek tactical chances.' (Karpov)



22 Bxa6!

The shortest way, although White would also have gained a decisive advantage after 22 fxe5 Bxb5 (22 ... Rxe5? 23 Bxa6 and Rb8+) 23 axb5 Rxe5 24 Qxd4 (24 b6 Karpov) 24 ... Rd5 25 Qf4 or 23 ... Qxe5 24 Nf5! (24 Bd2 Karpov; 24 Bb2!?) 24 ... Ng4 (24 ... Rd8 25 Bd2) 25 g3, and if 25 ... Rf8 there is the pretty stroke 26 Bf4! Qf6 (26 ... Qxf5? 27 Bd6!) 27 Nxd4 Rd5 28 Bc7! Qxd4+ 29 Qxd4 Rxf1+ 30 Rxf1 Rxd4 31 Bxa5 and wins.

22 ... Qxa6 23 Qxa6?!

To his misfortune, Korchnoi decided to play not for an attack, but for a technically won endgame. After 23 Rb8+! Kf7 24 Rb5! with the threat of fxe5 Black would have had no defence: 24 ... exf4 25 Ne4 Rc6 26

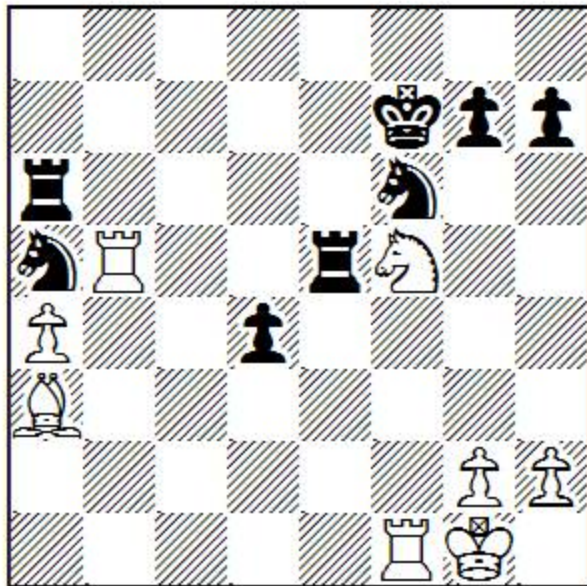
Nxf6 Rxf6 27 Qxh7 Nc6 28 Rf5!, or 24 ... Rc3 25 Qf5 Rxc3 (what else?) 26 fxe5! Rg6 27 exf6 gxf6 (27 ... Rxf6 28 Qd7+) 28 Bg5!, paralysing the opponent's army.

23 ... Rxa6 24 Ba3 (this bishop, which has no opponent, is destined to play an enormous role in the course of the subsequent battle) 24 ... Rd5 25 Nf5! Kf7

Black would hardly have had any more hopes after 25 ... Nc6 26 fxe5 Rxe5 27 Rb7, and if 27 ... Ra7, then 28 Rb6!, for example: 28 ... Nd8 (28 ... Re6 or 28 ... Rxa4 – 29 Bd6!) 29 Rb8 Rd7 30 Nxd4! Rxd4 31 Bb2 Red5 32 Bxd4 Rxd4 33 a5 Kf7 34 a6 Rd7 35 a7 Rxa7 36 Rxd8 and wins.

26 fxe5 Rxe5 27 Rb5

'The pawn capture 27 Nxd4 would have led to a lessening of the tension and a drawn outcome after 27 ... Nc4.' (Karpov). However, after 28 Rb7+! no draw is apparent: 28 ... Kg6 29 Bf8 Ne8 30 Rb4, or 28 ... Ke8 29 Bb4 Rxa4 30 Nf5 Kd8 31 Bc3 and Rxc7 with an extra pawn and the initiative, while if 28 ... Kg8, then 29 Be7 Rxa4 30 Bxf6 gxf6 31 Nf5 Nd2 32 Rc1!, and the '7th rank absolute' (Nimzowitsch) is bound to win for White.



27 ... Nc4!?

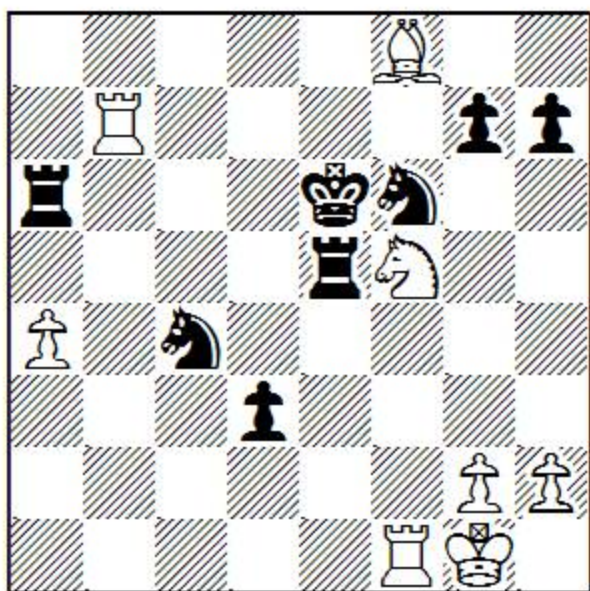
'In his preliminary calculations Korchnoi overlooked this move. Of course, White was hoping for the exchange of rooks' (Karpov): 27 ...

Rxb5 28 axb5 Ra8(e6) 29 Nxd4 and wins. 27 ... Re2 was slightly better, but also insufficient: 28 Bb2 (evidently, not the only way) 28 ... d3 29 Bc3 Nc4 30 Rb7+ Kf8 31 Rxc7 Re4 33 a5! Rf4! 34 Rb1 Ne8 35 Rc8 Kf7 36 g3! Re4 37 Rf1 Nf6 38 Rc5 and wins.

28 Rb7+ (28 Nd6+? Rxd6) 28 ... Ke6 (there is nothing else) 29 Nxd4+

In order to come to this pragmatic decision, Korchnoi spent nearly all his remaining time, but he couldn't bring himself to make either of the two sharp bishop moves, which also promised a win:

1) 29 Bf8!? d3!, and indeed, such a complicated position can probably be resolved only with the help of a computer.



Analysis diagram

In time-trouble it is only ultra-fine intuition or recklessness that would push a player along this path: 30 Nd4+! Kd5 31 Bxg7 Kxd4 32 Rxf6! Rxf6 33 Bxf6 d2 34 Rb1 Kd3 35 Bxe5 Nxe5 36 a5 Kc2 37 Ra1 d1Q+ 38 Rxd1 Kxd1 39 a6 Nc6 40 Kf2 Kd2 41 Kf3 Kd3 42 Kf4 Kc4 (42 ... Ke2 43 g4 Kf2 44 h4 etc.) 43 Kg5 Kb5 44 Kh6 Kxa6 45 Kxh7, and the machine announces mate in 24 moves(!);

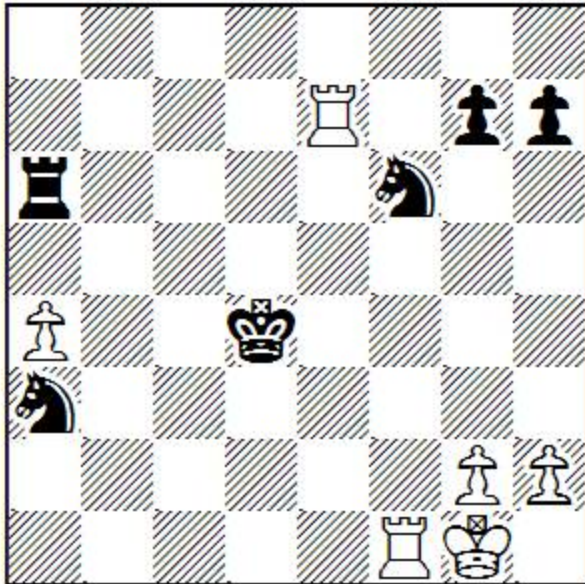
2) 29 Bb4!? This would also have demanded considerable accuracy of White: 29 ... Ne3 30 Nxd4+ Kd5 31 Nf3! Re8 32 Rb5+ Ke4 33 Ra1, or 29 ... Kd5 30 Rb5+ Ke4 31 Ng3+ Kd3 32 Rd1+ Kc2 33 Rxd4 Rxb5 34 axb5 Ra1+ 35 Kf2 Kb3 36 Be1 Ra2+ 37 Ne2 with an extra pawn and a technically won position.

29 ... Kd5 30 Nf3?

Time-trouble moves can be criticised only for the sake of establishing the truth. The flamboyant 30 Bf8!? Kxd4 31 Bxg7 looks risky, although White regains with interest the temporary piece sacrifice: 31 ... Ree6 32 Rf7 Ke5 33 g4! Rxa4 34 g5, or 31 ... Nd5 32 Rd1+! Ke4 33 Bxe5, winning the h-pawn and retaining the a-pawn.

On the other hand, the accurate 30 Nc2 Rxa4 31 Bf8! would have allowed White to convert his advantage without particular risk: 31 ... Ne8 32 Nb4+! Ke4 33 Nc6! with a decisive attack, or 31 ... Re8 32 Bxg7 Ne4 (32 ... Kc6 33 Rb4! Rxb4 34 Nxb4+ Kb5 35 Rxf6 Kxb4 36 Rh6 etc.) 33 Rd1+ Kc6 34 Rdd7 Na5 35 Rbc7+ Kb5 36 Bd4, and Black cannot hold out.

30 ... Nxa3 31 Nxe5 Kxe5 32 Re7+ Kd4



33 Rxc7?!

Korchnoi aims to leave Black without any pawns, hoping that his rook and pair of knights will be unable to cope with White's passed pawns, supported by his active rooks. He does not yet see any danger for himself, otherwise he would first have played 33 Rf4+!, driving back the black king, and only after 33 ... Kd5(c5) – 34 Rxc7 with chances of success.

33 ... Nc4 34 Rf4+ Ne4!?

‘To all appearances, Black could have gained a draw even after 34 ... Kd3, but then 35 Rf7, and in the end the h-pawn has to be exchanged for the a-pawn. It was better to do this immediately, but on the other hand another piece is activated.’ (Karpov)

I think that if 34 ... Kd3, then 35 h3! is stronger, for the moment not giving up the a-pawn: 35 ... Ne3?! 36 a5! Nfd5 37 Ra4, or 35 ... Nd5 36 Rd7! Ne3 37 Kf2, and the draw is still a long way off.

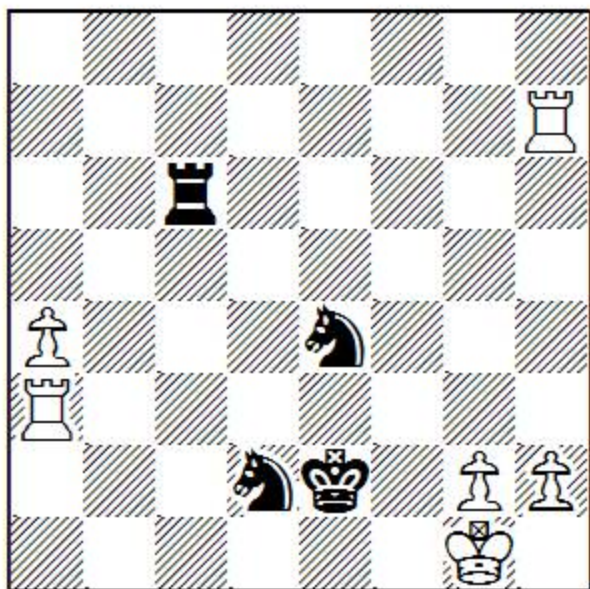
35 Rd7+! (after 35 Rxh7 Rxa4 36 h4 Ke5 37 Rf8 Ne3 Black would have managed to defend) **35 ... Ke3?!**

Karpov takes a chance! The cautious 35 ... Ke5 would have allowed him to dream only of a draw after 36 g3 Ncd6 (36 ... Rxa4? 37 Re7+) 37 Rxh7 Rxa4 38 Re7+ Kd5 39 g4 Ra1+ 40 Rf1.

36 Rf3+ Ke2 37 Rxh7?

How could White not take the pawn, with his flag about to fall? But 37 Re7! Ncd2 38 Ra3 was much stronger, with the intention of a4-a5 and h2-h3. Black, deprived of counterplay (38 ... Rc6 39 Ra1! or 38 ... Ra5 39 Ra2!), would have had to try and save his h-pawn and conduct a difficult struggle for a draw.

37 ... Ncd2?! (again risking a practical chance in the opponent's time-trouble, instead of the simple 37 ... Rxa4 with equality) **38 Ra3?!** (the cool-headed 38 Rff7! Rxa4 – not 38 ... Rc6? 39 h4! – 39 Ra7 Rc4 40 Ra1 would again have forced Black to fight for a draw) **38 ... Rc6!**



39 Ra1??

39 h4?? was also suicidal: 39 ... Ra1+ 40 Kh2 Nf1+ 41 Kh3 Nf2 mate. Only the advance of the g-pawn would have given a draw: 39 g4! (39 g3 is also possible) 39 ... Nf3+ 40 Kg2 Ne1+ 41 Kg1 Rc1 42 Ra2+ Kf3 43 Rf7+, but Korchnoi had no time to suspect any insidiousness on the part of his opponent, and he quickly made a move prepared beforehand.

39 ... Nf3+! 0-1

In time-trouble it is easy to miss such a stunning blow. White resigned: 40 gxf3 Rg6+ 41 Kh1 Nf2 mate, or 40 Kh1 Nf2 mate. Thunderous applause broke out in the hall: some Soviet tourists had arrived for that week.

Karpov: 'My two knights mated the enemy king in the endgame – such a thing had never before happened in a match for the world championship! After signing the score-sheet, Korchnoi went up to the demonstration board and stared at it for several minutes, as if trying to comprehend what exactly had happened.'

After this shock the challenger travelled to Manila, and took two time-outs, one after another. Karpov: 'To be frank, I suspect that Korchnoi was endeavouring not to have to play in the presence of the Soviet tourists (someone even reported his words to me: "I will not afford them this pleasure any more.") The administration of the Terrace Plaza Hotel arranged a celebration to mark my fourth win. I had to eat the white king, made out of cream, from a cake with four candles at the corners of a "tasty" chessboard, depicting the final position from the 17th game.'

That same evening, 26th August, the birthday of Roshal, the Soviet delegation's press attaché, was also celebrated, and Edmondson, a 'neutral' member of the jury, made a toast: 'We live in a divided world: continents drift apart, religions clash, families break up ... But chess, by contrast, unites us and joins separated continents together. To those who serve it! To you, dear Alex!' A quarter of a century later Roshal was to say: 'Alas, like many of my colleagues, I cannot completely agree with this compliment or consider myself a "dove of peace". War is war ...'

Soon a report arrived from Manila: Korchnoi was demanding the removal of the Soviet psychologist from the stalls and the installation of a glass screen between the auditorium and the stage, otherwise he would refuse to continue. The match was on the verge of collapse.

Baturinsky recalls that the same evening Karpov said to him: 'I must win the match, play it out to the end, despite all of Korchnoi's tricks. Think up an acceptable form of compromise, which would meet this aim.' This was how the well-known Baturinsky-Keene 'gentlemen's agreement' arose, and after a week's break the match was renewed.

Baturinsky: 'The period between the 18th and 26th games can safely be called the days of Karpov's missed opportunities. He lost the 21st game and did not score a single win, although he was close to victory in the 18th, 20th, 22nd and 25th – and he could easily have concluded the match, even if he had only won two of them. In almost every one of these games the world champion committed the same stereotyped mistake: after achieving a great advantage by excellent play and with a sufficient reserve of time, he displayed inexplicable haste and wasted all his chances. For example, in the 22nd game it would have been simplest for him to seal 41 Rxd6 – Tal thinks that Black would have resigned without resuming. But Karpov made this move on the board and continued playing rapidly; when the game was adjourned seven moves later there was no longer a win. In such cases the champion's trainers and friends in the auditorium wanted to shout: "Tolya, stop!" Alas, this was not possible ... Karpov explains such "slips" by his childhood habit of playing quickly. On growing up, he tried to rid himself of it, but he has not always succeeded. It would seem that there is also another reason: at moments of greatest tension, unavoidable when playing at such a level, one's inhibiting reflexes sometimes do not work.'

After the 22nd game Karpov was especially upset: 'Why didn't I stop immediately after the time control? But I got wound up: he moves – I move, he moves – I move ... When I came to, my net was empty. That's when I found myself unable to sleep! And for the first time in the match I turned to Zukhar for help. It is not defeats that not distress you, so much as missed opportunities ... I was in torment for half the night and then I summoned Zukhar. He tried his sorcery on me – in vain. The next day I walked about like a zombie, and that night I did not tempt fate, but asked Zukhar to immediately get down to business. And again all to no purpose. And pills were taboo for me – chess does not condone them ... I racked my brains and still couldn't understand: why, why, why couldn't I exploit my obvious playing advantage?'

Although the champion won the 27th game and the score now became 5-2, this did not improve his condition. 'Everything that could

burn in me had already burned out ... There remained only one, last step, but I did not know, I did not imagine, at that moment I did not see how to make it.'

And here the real drama began for Karpov: he lost the 28th and 29th games and, after a draw in the 30th, also the 31st (this psychological fatigue is very familiar to me, piling up when the goal is very close: in our 1986 return match, when also leading 'plus three', I contrived to lose three games in a row). To the astonishment of the entire chess world, the score became 5-5.

What happened just before the decisive 32nd game is described in the chapter 'Baguio through the Eyes of Korchnoi'.

Karpov: 'Do you know what distinguishes a competitor from a non-competitor? If a non-competitor loses successive games, he goes to pieces and gives up, whereas a competitor continues moving forward, because he knows that the bad run will somewhere come to an end, and things will improve. I sensed that Korchnoi's wave had already passed, and that mine was again beginning to rise On another occasion after such a trip (*to Manila, during the time-out – G.K.*) I would have been dead tired, but here it was as though I had bathed in the water of life. For the 32nd game I arrived calm and confident. Korchnoi barely looked at me – and that was enough. When week after week you see one and the same person in front of you, you can guess his condition and mood from the first glance. And Korchnoi realised everything; even earlier than me he realised that this game would be the last. I read this in his momentary glance, after which he immediately looked away. I conducted this game in the way that I would always like to play: calmly, without emotions, easily and naturally.'

Unfortunately, the media coverage of the historic 32nd game was amazingly superficial and one-sided. Apparently it was affected by the enormous political importance of its result, and also the extraordinarily nervous match situation and the extreme fatigue of all the participants in this event, including the commentators. I hope that I have succeeded in filling the resulting gap.

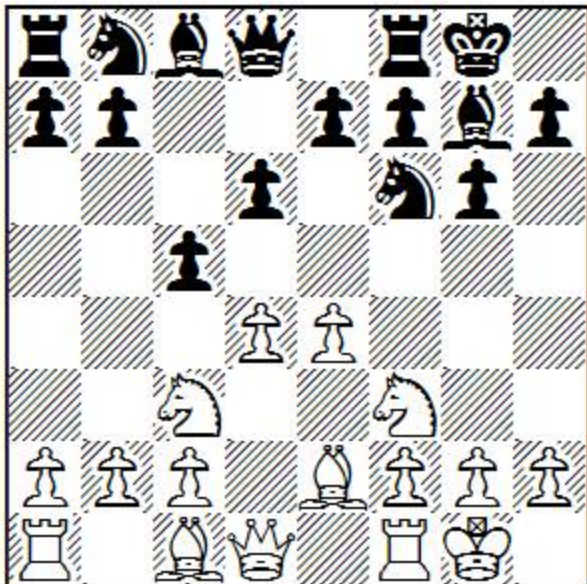
Game 77

A.Karpov-V.Korchnoi

World Championship Match, Baguio 1978, 32nd game

Schmid Benoni A43

1 e4 d6 2 d4 Nf6 3 Nc3 g6 4 Nf3 Bg7 5 Be2 0-0 6 0-0 c5



A rare move. 'Korchnoi is faithful to his favourite tactics – of changing the opening patterns as often as possible.' (Karpov). The 18th game went 6 ... Bg4 7 Be3 Nc6 (cf. *Game No.73*).

The choice of opening at the finish of a lengthy match, especially with Black, is not an easy matter. Your nerves are already frayed, and everything that you have played earlier seems full of flaws. You want something new, but at the same time also solid and slightly puzzling. According to grandmaster Panno, who helped Korchnoi in this match, they wanted 'to choose something rather complicated, especially taking account of the champion's psychological condition.' One can only guess who convinced him to play 6 ... c5 (although it is known that Keene and Torre had played in similar vein). But the choice proved unfortunate for Korchnoi, and they also guessed wrong about Karpov's psychological condition.

7 d5

Instantly taking play from a Pirc-Ufimtsev Defence into a well known Indian set-up: the so-called Schmid-Tal Benoni, which had already occurred in Karpov's games. It is amusing that the first 'mainstay' of the variation was the chief arbiter at the match (true, by that time he had left Baguio) and the second was one of the champion's helpers ...

Korchnoi was expecting 7 dxc5 dxc5 8 Qxd8 Rxd8 9 Be3 b6 10 Rfd1, since theory judged this variation to be slightly favourable for White. Karpov: 'But I realised that the opponent could have prepared an improvement, and I avoided the exchange of pawns.' Indeed, soon after the match one of Korchnoi's seconds demonstrated a new move, which solved Black's opening problems: 10 ... Nc6! 11 Rxd8+ Nxd8 12 Rd1 Bb7 (Andersson-Stean, Munich 1979).

Korchnoi was shocked: 'I had analysed this move for many days, counting on the psychological effect of its novelty. Great was my surprise when at the critical moment Karpov replied without thinking. He knew the move 6 ... c5 (*is this really so surprising for a top-class grandmaster?* – G.K.) and moreover – he was expecting its appearance on that very day!'

Once again one has to give Karpov's psychological insight its due.

7 ... Na6

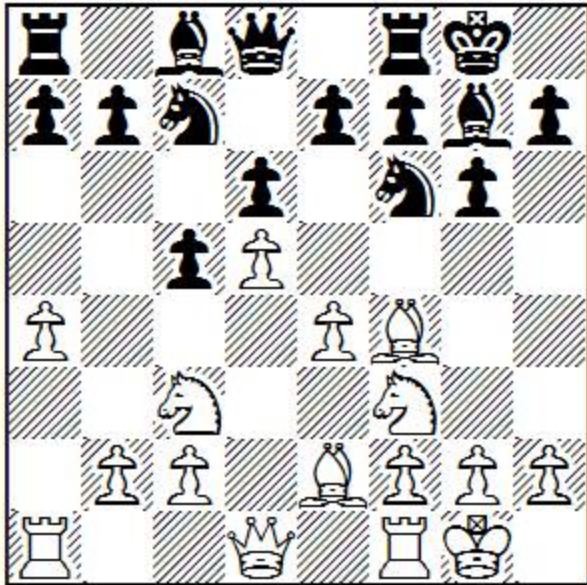
The most popular continuation. The alternative strategy involves the immediate undermining of the centre – 7 ... e6.

8 Bf4

This move, inhibiting ... e7-e6, is now deemed the strongest, but at that time they often played both 8 h3 and 8 Nd2 (*Volume 4, Game No.21*).

8 ... Nc7 9 a4

Useful prophylaxis. If 9 Nd2, then 9 ... b5?! 10 Nxb5 is questionable (Najdorf-Tal, Moscow 1967), but 9 ... Nd7 is acceptable. But if 9 Re1, then 9 ... b5! 10 Nxb5 (10 Bxb5 Nh5!) 10 ... Nxe4 11 Nxc7 Qxc7 12 Bc4 Nf6 and Black solves his opening problems.



9 ... b6

One of the three main replies: Black forestalls the blockading a4-a5 and unhurriedly prepares ... b6-b5 or ... e7-e6. In the event of 9 ... Bg4 10 h3 Bxf3 11 Bxf3 Nd7 12 Qd2 a6 13 Be2 White has a slight but enduring advantage (Karpov-Browne, Madrid 1973).

9 ... a6!? is sharper – this possibly does not give Black full equality, but here he at least acquires some counter-chances. For example, in the game Tal-Velimirovic (Belgrade 1979) after 10 Re1 (currently 10 Qd2 or 10 h3 is in fashion, but not 10 a5 Nb5!) 10 ... Rb8 11 a5 (11 e5 Nh5 is also unclear) 11 ... b5 12 axb6 Rxb6 Black created piece play compensating for the weakening of his queenside.

To judge by the further course of the game, Korchnoi did not in fact come to his senses after the opponent's forceful reaction to his preparation. Thoughts crept in about traitors and spies, and in addition, in violation of all that had been agreed, in the 4th row of the auditorium the 'terrible' Dr Zukhar again appeared and fixed him with his penetrating stare. The challenger's playing mood was clearly spoiled and he began deploying the pieces 'by hand', without any clear-cut plan. And a few moves later he committed an imperceptible, but serious mistake ...

10 Re1 Bb7

After 10 ... a6 White could have played 11 h3 and carried out the same arrangement of his forces as in the game: 11 ... Nd7 (11 ... Rb8? 12 e5!) 12 Bc4 Rb8 13 Qd3 (Khalifman-Ermenkov, Burgas 1994), or 11 ... Bb7 12 Bc4 Qd7 13 Qd3 (cf. the following note).

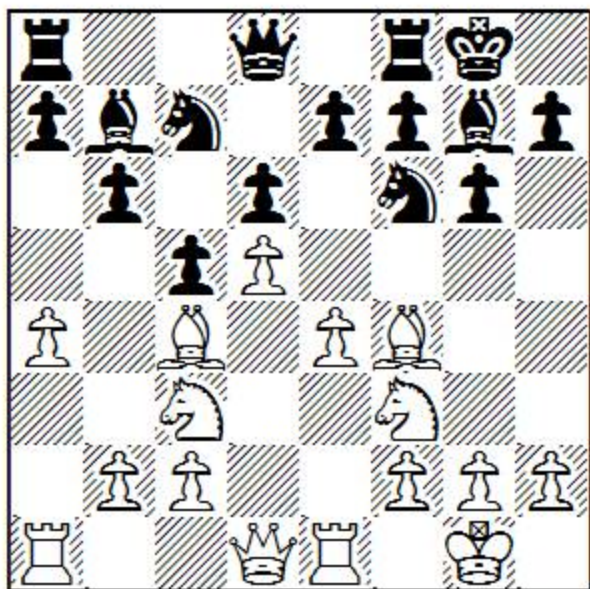
11 Bc4!

An unpleasant nuance: White immediately supports his centre, saving a tempo on h2-h3. 'The prophylactic 11 h3, with the idea of maintaining the bishop on the h2-b8 diagonal, could have proved to be a delay after 11 ... Qd7 12 Bc4 Rad8 13 Qd3 e5 (or 13 ... e6 – G.K.), initiating double-edged play.' (Karpov)

However, practice has made certain corrections to this evaluation: 13 Nb5! a6 14 Nxc7 Qxc7 15 Qe2 Qc8 16 Rad1 Rfe8 17 c3, and Black is still without counterplay (Hort-Seppeur, Bundesliga 1984).

Therefore at the end of the 20th century the main debates revolved around 12 ... a6 13 Qd3! (it is too early for 13 e5?! Nh5 Sosonko-Torre, Amsterdam 1977; Beliavsky-Torre, Moscow 1981) 13 ... Rad8 14 Rad1 Qc8 15 Qe3 Rfe8, and if 16 Bh6, then 16 ... e6! (Piket-Gheorghiu, Ostend 1987; Adianto-Torre, San Francisco 1991; Yusupov-Ljubojevic, Linares 1992), but in the 21st century they began playing 16 Rd2! and Red1, maintaining the threat of a bind.

The absence of h2-h3 induces Black to drive away the bishop at f4 from the key e5-square.



11 ... Nh5

'A loss of precious time. Instead of standing still, 11 ... Qd7 was necessary, aiming after 12 e5 dxe5 13 Nxe5 Qf5 to provoke tactical complications at any cost: 14 Nxg6 fxe6 15 Bxc7 Ng4.' (Karpov). Alas, after 16 Bg3 Bd4 17 Qe2 with the threat of Nd1 the computer coldly ascertains that the complications quickly come to an end: 17 ... Nxf2 18 Nb5!, or 17 ... Qxf2+ 18 Bxf2 Rxf2 19 Kh1 Rxe2 20 Rxe2 Nf2+ 21 Rxf2 Bxf2 22 d6+, and White wins. Therefore if 12 e5 the correct reply is 12 ... Nh5! with an unclear game.

'Apparently, if 11 ... Qd7 White should reply 12 Qd3, retaining somewhat the better chances, but in general a very tense battle would have developed.' (Karpov). Thus after 12 ... a6 (or 11 ... a6 12 Qd3 Qd7) apart from the normal 13 h3 Rad8 14 Rad1 (cf. the note to White's 11th move) White has the strong 13 Rab1! Rab8 (Black has not managed to play ... Rad8, and 13 ... e6?! loses a pawn) 14 b4! Nh5 15 Bd2 cxb4 16 Rxb4 with the initiative. And if 12 ... Rad8, then Hort's 13 Nb5! is good, clearly consolidating White's advantage (if 13 ... Nh5, then 14 Bc1).

Black's position is also not improved by 11 ... Nd7 12 Qd2 etc. Therefore, in contrast to Korchnoi's next move, the criticism of 11 ... Nh5 seems unfounded.

12 Bg5 Nf6?

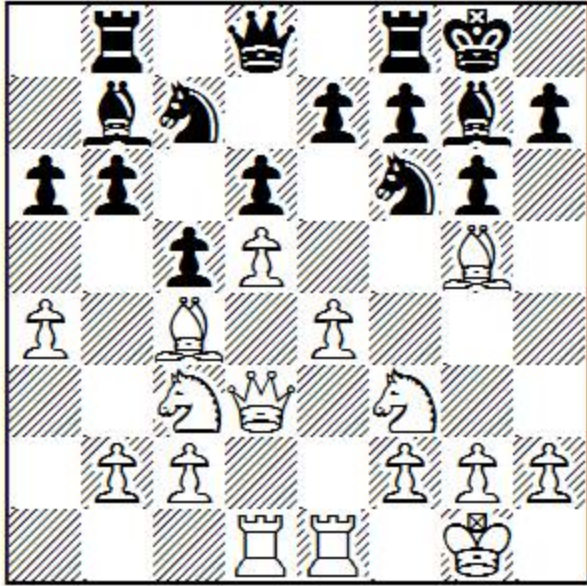
'It seems to me that on this occasion Korchnoi's predilection for solid positions served him badly,' writes Karpov ... in his note to 11 ... Nh5. But the faultiness of Black's 12th move was remarked on neither by the winner himself, nor by Tal in *64*, nor by Filip in *Informator*, nor by many other commentators!

12 ... h6 was necessary, for example: 13 Bh4 g5 14 Nd2 Nf4 15 Bg3 Ng6 16 Nf3 a6, or 13 Be3 e6! 14 Qd2 exd5 15 exd5 g5, enlivening the position at the cost of weakening the kingside. This obligatory method of defence occurred in practice at the end of the 20th century.

13 Qd3

'Now in all directions it is much harder for Black to gain play.' (Karpov). Or more accurately – now Black is on the verge of defeat!

13 ... a6 14 Rad1 Rb8



15 h3?!

Ultra-safe play. 'I didn't want to take a risk at this moment,' writes Karpov. 'In principle the consistent continuation, increasing White's spatial advantage and intensifying his pressure, was 15 e5!? dxe5 16 Nxe5 etc. In another situation I would definitely have played that, but in this game there was no way that I could "sell too cheaply" and put at risk White's entire initiative.'

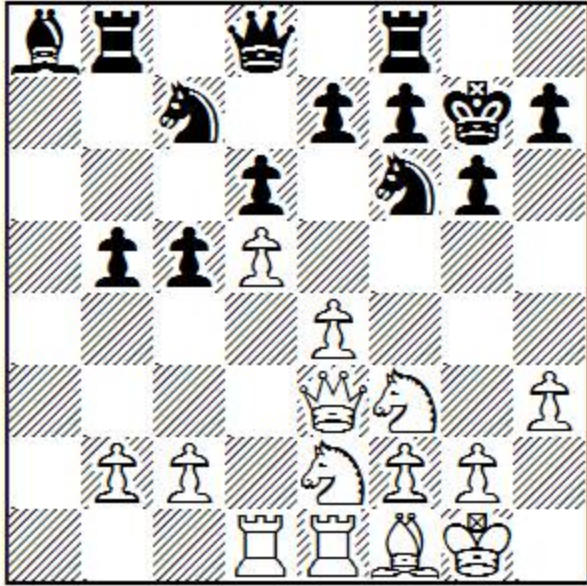
In fact, after 16 ... Qd6 17 Qf3! Rbe8 18 Bf4 Qd8 19 Nc6 Qd7 20 Be5, or 16 ... b5 17 axb5 axb5 18 Bxb5! (18 Nxb5?! Ncxd5 Tal) 18 ... Ncxd5 (18 ... Nxb5 19 Qxb5 and wins) 19 Nxd5 Qxd5 (19 ... Bxd5 20 c4) 20 Qxd5 (but not Karpov's move 20 Qg3? because of 20 ... Qxg2+!) 20 ... Bxd5 21 c4 the game would have gone into the technical stage of converting White's enormous advantage.

Thus after 15 e5! the battle in this highly important encounter could have concluded, without having begun. Whereas the move in the game leaves White with 'only' an enduring positional advantage.

15 ... Nd7 16 Qe3

'Occupying another important line and at the same time suppressing counterplay such as 16 ... b5 17 axb5 Nb6.' (Karpov)

16 ... Ba8! 17 Bh6 b5 (there is no other play, although without the bishop at g7 this is no longer so effective) **18 Bxg7 Kxg7 19 Bf1 Nf6 20 axb5 axb5 21 Ne2**



21 ... Bb7?!

The opponent's caution could have been exploited by 21 ... e6 22 dxe6 Nxe6 23 Ng3 Qc7. Of course, this 'would have led to a serious weakening of the pawn structure' (Karpov), but Black's position would still have remained perfectly viable.

22 Ng3 Ra8 23 c3 Ra4 24 Bd3 Qa8!?

'Disregarding White's threats. The queen moves away to the edge of the board at the moment when the storm clouds are gathering over the king's position. Perhaps Korchnoi underestimated the danger?' (Karpov). Or perhaps, on the contrary, Karpov overestimated White's threats?!

25 e5!

A breakthrough that has seemingly long been imminent, which Karpov called a 'dagger-blow'. In the event of 25 Qg5 Black would have defended by 25 ... Kh8! 26 e5 Ng8.

25 ... dxe5

25 ... Nfxd5? would have allowed a simple, but spectacular mate: 26 Nh5+ gxh5 (26 ... Kh8 27 Qh6 Ne6 28 Ng5) 27 Qg5+ Kh8 28 Qh6 f5 29 Ng5.

26 Qxe5 Ncxd5 27 Bxb5

It is possible that, although not noticed by anyone, this was the culmination of the entire drama in Baguio.

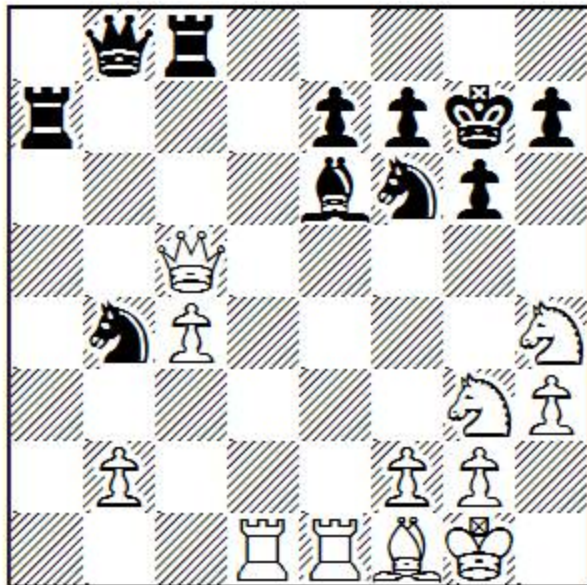
recommends 29 c4 Qxe5 30 Rxe5 'with a won ending' – 30 ... Nc7? 31 Rxc5, but Black replies 31 ... Ra5! and the win slips away. 29 Qg5! e6 30 c4 Nc7 31 Rd6! is correct, with an overwhelming advantage.

29 Be2

'It has to be agreed that there is something attractive about this move.' (Karpov). I prefer centralisation: 29 Ne4 Nc7 30 Bd3 Ne6 31 Nxc5 etc.

29 ... Be6 30 c4 Nb4 31 Qxc5 Qb8 32 Bf1 Rc8?!

The obligatory 32 ... h6 would also have been unlikely to save Black. Korchnoi was in time-trouble and no doubt realised at heart that the game was already lost.



33 Qg5 Kh8 34 Rd2 Nc6 35 Qh6 Rg8 (an unaesthetic move; 35 ... Ng8 36 Qe3 Nf6 was slightly better) **36 Nf3 Qf8 37 Qe3 Kg7?!**

37 ... Rb7 (Karpov) **38 Ng5 Bd7** was more tenacious, but Black had only a few seconds left on his clock.

38 Ng5 Bd7 39 b4 Qa8 40 b5 Na5 41 b6 Rb7 1-0

The sealed move. The following day Keene informed the arbiter Filip that Black was resigning the game without resuming.

By winning this unforgettable match by a score of 6-5 (with 21 draws), Karpov retained his title of world champion.

But what would have happened in the event of him losing? Ten years later, already in the era of perestroika and glasnost, Mikhail Tal,

appearing on television, was to say with a smile: 'We could not imagine the consequences if an anti-Soviet player, not a Soviet, had become world champion. It is possible that then chess would have been declared a pseudo-science.' Later he bumped into Korchnoi at the Olympiad in Novi Sad (1990), and in reply to reproaches 'regarding the behaviour of the Soviets' he suddenly said to him in an apologetic tone: 'There, in Baguio, we were all afraid for you – if you had won the match, you could have been physically eliminated. Everything had been prepared for this ...'

And Korchnoi seizes on this version in his most recent interviews: 'I did not deliberately lose the match in Baguio, but if I had won it, everything had been prepared for my elimination! In his time, Roshal apparently signed an obligation to "keep secret for ever", but Tal, who did not sign anything, told me about this directly to my face! I repeat: I did not deliberately lose this match. But some higher forces did not allow me to win it.'

But this is how Alexander Roshal commented on this conflict in autumn 2005:

'Throughout my long life in chess I have not met one single top player who was not wary and suspicious. Not one! These traits – wariness and suspicion, produced by constant rivalry, help to preserve opening secrets, and induce you to be friendly only with those who are not dangerous, who will not betray you, not inflict psychological trauma, and so on. The suspiciousness of other great players reached hypochondriac, and sometimes even manic proportions.

'I remember how in the summer of 1974, not long before the first Karpov-Korchnoi match, after arriving at the Olympiad in Nice I entered the enormous playing hall together with Korchnoi's wife Bella. Karpov was sitting a long way from us, on a platform, and later he suddenly asked me: "What were you talking about for 35 minutes with Korchnoi's wife?" Just think: during a game, at a distance of a hundred metres from us, he noted the time of our conversation! He needed to be sure of whether I was with him or with Korchnoi. But I was on good terms with both of them (and quite recently Viktor presented me with a copy of his book with the inscription: 'To my friend-cum-enemy').

'Korchnoi suffered even more from suspiciousness. Once Tal said jokingly to me: "You have a persecution mania, which periodically turns into megalomania and back again." But, in my opinion, something similar used to happen with Korchnoi. This was a continuous process:

he lost – oh, oh, I have been betrayed, there are spies all around; he won – I am indeed the greatest!

‘On learning from Tal about their meeting in Novi Sad and that in Baguio we were supposedly afraid for Korchnoi’s life, I was annoyed: “Misha, why did you have to make a joke like that with *him*? Do you know *who* you are joking with?” Tal replied: “So what – now it is probably pleasant for him to hear this.’ But you have to know Korchnoi: any joke that concerns him, he takes seriously! And, being mistrustful and inclined towards mysticism, he is always looking for a needle in a haystack – when it isn’t there.

‘To judge by his interview, Viktor obviously overestimates how informed I was about non-chess questions: I didn’t know anything about a threat to his life! And I reject all the rumours about “preparations for his elimination in Baguio” as being absurd and far from the truth. The reality was this: in the event of Karpov losing, a return match would have taken place within a year, and the Soviet Union would have made every effort to ensure that Tolya regained the chess crown for the country.

‘And besides, why should we have been afraid for Korchnoi?! Rather we should have been afraid for ourselves! When the score became 5-5, I went down with high blood pressure, and Zukhar, Balashov and Zaitsev came to my room. The psychologist said: “I am now going to count to seventeen – when you wake up, all will be well.” He counted so tediously and unpleasantly, that I did indeed become drowsy. Then I asked: “Has Zukhar gone?” The trainers said: “He’s gone. But don’t worry – we have something prepared.” And I replied to them: “With your preparations we’ll most likely end up felling trees.” I knew about this not just by hearsay. I remember how similar black jokes were also cracked by the experienced Baturinsky. But, fortunately, Tolya won.’

The ‘black jokes’ of Roshal and Baturinsky require an explanation: in Stalinist times the parents of the former were subjected to repression, while the latter served as a military procurator for many years, and retired holding the rank of colonel of justice.

Also of great interest, but from the purely chess point of view, are the exclusive comments of Igor Zaitsev:

‘I have heard the most varied stories about the 32nd game, some of them quite fantastic. As an eye-witness, who sat through the entire match in the auditorium, I should also like to express my opinion.

‘I will begin a long way back. It seems to me that Korchnoi derived a great benefit from his defeat against Spassky in the final Candidates match in 1968. I don’t know how and on what he began working at that time, but from a certain moment his play became more dynamic, and his strategic ideas became more complete and polished. It was the strategic component that became the leading feature of Korchnoi’s play. Therefore, in contrast to other contenders for the crown, he could easily replace one opening with another – despite his considerable age! The point is that, as they grow older, the overwhelming majority of players become strongly accustomed to the central structure typical of each opening, and to switch from one structure to another becomes painful ...

‘In view of this, one could always expect Korchnoi to employ variations where the process of forming the pawn structure is varied and stretched out over a period of time. For example, this happens in the English Opening (one of Korchnoi’s most effective opening weapons) or the Alekhine Defence (which was also in his arsenal at one time). Also in keeping with these set-ups is the flexible Pirc-Ufimtsev Defence. Therefore Korchnoi’s decision to choose this particular opening at the most important moment in the match is not something that I consider “sensational” or “short-sighted”, but rather fully expected and in accordance with his chess portrait.

‘Firstly, Korchnoi had already played this defence twice against Karpov – at the Interzonal tournament in Leningrad (1973) and in the 18th game of the match in Baguio, and both times it had all turned out well for Black. Secondly, Keene, the challenger’s second, had also played this against Karpov – at the European Team Championship in Moscow (1977), and although he lost, he was nevertheless able to provoke double-edged complications. And this could have drawn the attention of Korchnoi, who at the finish was aiming to build on his success. Besides, the manner in which Karpov plays this opening – one and the same solid, unhurried set-up – apparently not only did not frighten Korchnoi, but, on the contrary, even to some extent suited him, as he had clearly summoned up his courage. An indirect confirmation of these conclusions is Karpov’s only loss in his triumphant 50th USSR Championship (1983), which he suffered with White against Azmaiparashvili precisely in the Pirc-Ufimtsev Defence.

‘Of course, the Pirc with 6 ... c5 is rather different, but, in view of its comparative novelty, such a reorientation could have proved both

unexpected, and successful. Incidentally, this variation is by no means discredited in theory and later it was played by many well-known grandmasters, right up to Kramnik. And yet it has to be admitted that here the course of positional pressurising for White is more in Karpov's style, whereas Black's latent preparation of this or that undermining of the enemy centre is not fully in Korchnoi's spirit. Therefore it is not surprising that in the 32nd game the situation on the board began quite soon to turn in our favour. However, right to the very last minutes of this dramatic encounter, our totally exhausted group did not believe that things would have a happy end.

'However, the return flight was also far from cloudless – in the literal sense: almost all the way to Bombay we were followed closely by another typhoon. I remember how several times the aircraft plunged into a deep air pocket, inducing slight panic among the passengers. But even so, this was nothing in comparison with that incredible relief that we all felt, when the burden of this ordeal was lifted from our shoulders.'

In my view, Karpov played this match during something of a slump, and so right up to the 17th game he did not have any playing advantage over Korchnoi – moreover, objectively Korchnoi even played the more interesting chess. It was only after his tragic blunder in the 17th game that Korchnoi, as they say, 'began to drift', and he should have quickly lost the match. But Karpov did not win several won positions, and the match dragged out ...

In the end, the result of the match showed that Korchnoi had too great an amplitude of oscillation between strong and weak moves. Karpov played, perhaps, not so colourfully, but he nevertheless made fewer mistakes. Generally speaking, the 'Karpov problem' consists precisely in this evenness of his play, his amazing ability to maintain a fairly high level quality of moves for a long time. Of course, he made blunders, but, in contrast to the blunders of his opponents, in the overwhelming majority of cases they were not fatal. This property, plus the champion's exceptional tenacity, enabled him also later to 'stretch out' the most difficult, sometimes hopeless matches.

Baguio served as a warning signal for Karpov, forcing him to begin readjusting little by little. And from 1979 he began a period when he developed a new algorithm and steadily improved his play. Later, remembering his battles with Korchnoi, Karpov was to comment: 'Those were his best years, but I developed more quickly than he strengthened his play.'

Celestial Play

In February 1979 Karpov started a strong tournament in Munich and was leading after five rounds (+2=3), but then he was forced to return home urgently because of the death of his father. After this heavy blow he would probably have declined to participate in the forthcoming 'Tournament of Stars' (Montreal, April-May 1979), had he not agreed beforehand to play there, and had he not realised that if he dropped out it would 'place under threat the very organisation of the event'.

The double-round tournament of ten stars in Montreal, although 'distinguished' by the absence of the boycotted Korchnoi, assembled a field that was unique for those times: Karpov, Tal, Spassky and all the strongest non-Soviet players in the world. An ideal test for the champion! And after a short draw at the start with Hübner he determinedly got down to business.

Tal: 'Chessplayers, as a rule, are unforgiving people, and for this reason the 2nd round clash between Karpov and Timman was eagerly awaited. After all, it was the Dutch grandmaster who had inflicted the last tournament defeat on the world champion (*in Bugojno 1978 – G.K.*). It could be expected that Karpov would be out for revenge, and in this he succeeded brilliantly. The entire game was conducted by Karpov in one breath: he consistently restricted his opponent's counterplay, and seized space inch by inch ...'

Here it should be mentioned that Karpov's special, exceptional refinement in the sphere of prophylaxis makes him close to Petrosian. 'In contrast to the majority of his colleagues, it would appear that from nature he was endowed with highly developed prophylactic thinking,' thinks Mark Dvoretsky. 'The following game by Karpov (and to no lesser degree his commentary on it) vividly demonstrates the style of play and the way of thinking of the then world champion. How much subtle work is concealed behind outward simplicity!'

Game 78

A.Karpov-J.Timman

Montreal 1979, 2nd round

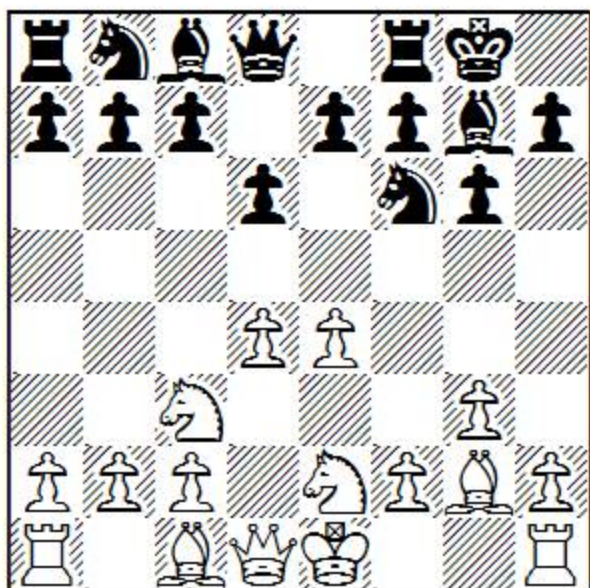
Pirc-Ufimtsev Defence B07

1 e4 d6 2 d4 Nf6 3 Nc3 g6 4 g3

Karpov usually played 4 Nf3 and Be2 (*Game Nos.73 and 77*), but in this encounter with one of the acknowledged experts on this defence he wanted, in his own words, to experiment a little, to try something new: 'I played in accordance with my mood.'

4 ... Bg7 5 Bg2 0-0 6 Nge2

Also a solid, but comparatively rare variation. 'Since the time that it came to prominence in chess theory, the Pirc-Ufimtsev Defence has acquired the reputation of being a not altogether correct opening. And, in order to confirm this opinion, all kinds of attacking schemes for White were intensively developed. Years were required to get away from such an incorrect approach, but even now, through inertia, many unhurried strategic plans are still overshadowed.' (Karpov)



6 ... e5 (another plan tried by Timman is 6 ... Nbd7 and ... c7-c5) **7 0-0**

Soon after this game it also happened that I had to defend this position with Black: 7 h3 exd4 (7 ... b6!? or 7 ... Nbd7 and ... b7-b6 is interesting) 8 Nxd4 Re8 9 0-0 Nbd7 10 a4 a5 11 Ndb5 Nc5 12 Bg5 Bd7 13 Qd2 h6! 14 Bxf6 Bxf6 15 Nd5 Bxb5 16 axb5 (Geller-Kasparov, 47th USSR Championship, Minsk 1979), and here the simplest was 16 ... Nxe4 with equality.

7 ... Na6

Not the best reply; 7 ... c6, 7 ... Nc6 or 7 ... exd4 is much more usual. 'As the middlegame approaches, and particularly in the

middlegame itself, the scattered state of Black's forces will cause him much inconvenience. However, leading grandmasters (and Timman is certainly one of them) are obliged to have – and usually do have – their own opinion regarding this or that book variation. This enables evaluations to be made more precise, and promotes the development of theory.'

8 Re1 c6 9 h3

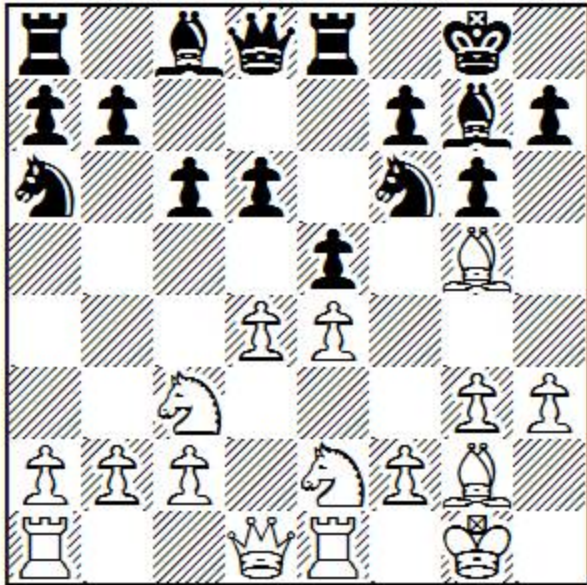
'A typical prophylactic move in such situations,' explains Karpov. 'White restricts the opponent's bishop, and at the same time also creates a "no-go area" on the kingside for the remaining minor pieces.'

9 ... Re8

'All Black's hopes of obtaining counterplay are associated with pressure on the e4-pawn.' (Karpov). 'But this is already prophylactic thinking,' adds Dvoretsky. 'Karpov immediately determines the opponent's main idea, for which he will carefully watch throughout the entire game.'

10 Bg5

Provoking ... h7-h6, in order then to play Qd2 with gain of tempo. 'Again a typical device, which pursues the same aim – the accumulation of small advantages. Then all these imperceptible factors merge together to form that superiority of one set of pieces over another, which is customarily called a positional advantage.' (Karpov). True, in the light of the following comment, the simple 10 Be3!? comes into consideration.



10 ... h6?!

After 10 ... exd4 11 Nxd4 h6 Karpov gives 12 Bf4! g5 13 Bc1 (the weakness of the f5-square!), while if 10 ... Qb6!? – ‘simply 11 Rb1 with advantage, since 11 ... exd4 12 Nxd4 Nc5 13 b4 Ncxe4 is clearly unsatisfactory in view of 14 Bxe4! Nxe4 15 Nxe4 Bxd4 16 Nf6+.’ Of course, 13 ... Ne6 is correct, and therefore I would have preferred 13 Nb3! Ne6 14 Be3 Qc7 15 Qd2 etc.

But instead of 12 ... Nc5, ‘12 ... d5 is possible, or 12 ... Ng4!? 13 hxg4 (13 Nce2 Nf6! – G.K.) 13 ... Bxd4 14 Be3 Bxe3 15 Rxe3 d5! with an unclear game – this variation has its inner logic: the bishop at g5 is taking almost no part in the battle for the centre, and Black exploits this factor.’ (Dvoretsky). Indeed, after 16 e5 d4! 17 Na4 Qb4 18 c3 Bxg4! 19 Qxg4 Qxa4 20 Ra1 (20 e6 Qxa2!) 20 ... Rad8 21 b3 Qa3 22 cxd4 Nc7 he consolidates his position. 14 Qf3 Bxg4! 15 Qxg4 Bxf2+ 16 Kh2 Bxe1 17 Rxe1 Re5! is also unclear.

11 Be3 Qc7?!

Taking away this square from the knight at a6. Karpov recommends the prophylactic 11 ... Kh7 (‘since all the same this move will have to be made sooner or later’) followed by 12 Qd2 exd4 13 Nxd4 (! – G.K.) 13 ... Nc5 14 f3 d5 15 Nxc6 Ncxe4 16 fxe4 (not 16 Nxd8 Nxd2 17 Nxf7?! Rxe3! 18 Rxe3 d4) 16 ... bxc6, ‘and Black has a good game.’

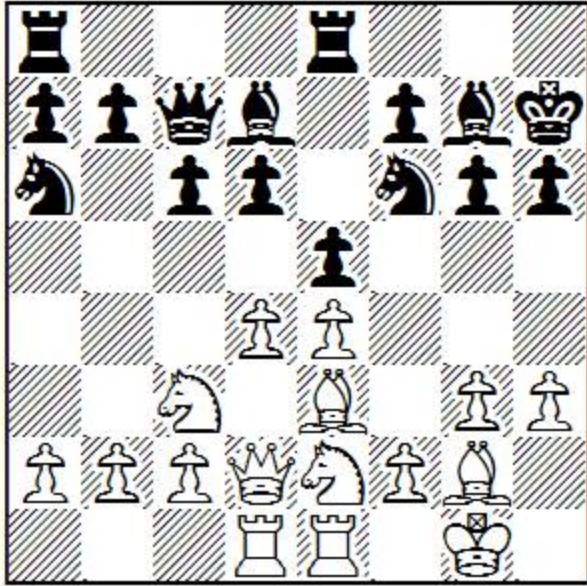
However, 17 exd5 cxd5 18 Nxd5 contests this evaluation: if 18 ... Rb8 there follows 19 Bxa7 Rxe1+ 20 Rxe1 Rxb2 21 Bd4!, if 18 ... Ne4 – 19 Qd3 Nxg3 (19 ... f5 20 Rad1) 20 Bf2 or the unexpected 20 Bxh6!, while after 18 ... Nxd5 19 Qxd5 Qxd5 20 Bxd5 Rb8 21 Bxa7 Rxe1+ 22 Rxe1 Rxb2 23 Bb3! White retains his extra pawn and chances of success (23 ... Bxh3 24 Re7 etc.).

Apart from 15 ... Ncxe4 Dvoretsky has suggested 15 ... bxc6 16 Bxc5 dxe4, but here too after 17 Qxd8 Rxd8 18 fxe4 Black does not appear to have compensation for the pawn: 18 ... Nd7 (18 ... Rd2 19 e5!) 19 Rad1 Rb8 20 Ba3 Re8 (20 ... Bxc3? 21 bxc3 and 22 e5!) 21 Na4 etc.

Apparently it is better to bring the restless knight into play – 11 ... exd4 12 Bxd4! (12 Nxd4 Nc5 13 Bf4 Nh5!) 12 ... Nc7 (not now 12 ... Nc5?! on account of 13 e5!), ‘in the spirit of the game Sveshnikov-Tseshkovsky (Sochi 1976), although this also does not promise Black equality’ (Karpov) after 13 Qd2 Ne6 14 Be3 Kh7 15 g4.

12 Qd2 Kh7 (Black has similar problems after 12 ... exd4 13 Nxd4 Kh7 14 Rad1) **13 Rad1 Bd7**

It is unfavourable to play 13 ... exd4 14 Bxd4, when again 14 ... Nc5? is not possible because of 15 e5! And ‘in the event of 13 ... Be6 14 g4 Rad8 15 f4 Bc4 16 Ng3 White has an equally promising position as in the game.’ (Karpov). In Dvoretsky’s opinion, here 16 ... exf4 17 Bxf4 c5 deserves consideration. I think that after this White would have happily replied 18 d5.



14 g4!

A typical move. Karpov's commentary is instructive: 'After some thought, I came to the conclusion that straightforward play in the centre would not get me anywhere. Now, with the aim of seizing fresh territory, the kingside pawns must be advanced. But I did not wish to play 14 f4 immediately. It would be illogical to increase the tension straight away – all the same White will subsequently have to play g3-g4, so why not first utilise a resource for strengthening the position, such as g3-g4 and Ng3. At the same time White also solves an important strategic problem – he reinforces his e4-pawn.'

14 ... Rad8 15 Ng3 Bc8

'The advance f2-f4 can be radically prevented only by ... g6-g5, but Black's position is not yet so bad for him to decide on such a desperate measure.'

16 f4! b5?!

Every grandmaster has his favourite moves, which he makes at the first opportunity. Timman liked to activate his game by advancing his b-pawn, but here this merely weakens his position even more. However, it is hard to offer Black good advice: thus, in the event of 16 ... exf4 17 Bxf4 Qb6 18 b3 followed by Rf1 and Be3 he would also be threatened with death by suffocation.

‘Knowing Karpov’s style, it is very easy to guess his next move.’
(Dvoretsky)

17 a3! b4?! 18 axb4 Nxb4 (the only result of the desperate pawn advance is that now it is advantageous for White to go into practically any endgame) **19 Nce2!**

‘Black’s idea was somehow to bring his pieces together, by playing ... a7-a5, ... Ba6, ... exd4 and ... c6-c5. But this is a lengthy process, and White succeeds in hindering his opponent’s plan.’ (Karpov)

‘We would probably have been thinking about how to exploit as soon as possible White’s solid positional advantage – whether to play f4-f5, prepare g4-g5, and so on. But Karpov thinks quite differently: even in such situations he first of all monitors the opponent’s possible intentions and tries to prevent them.’ (Dvoretsky)

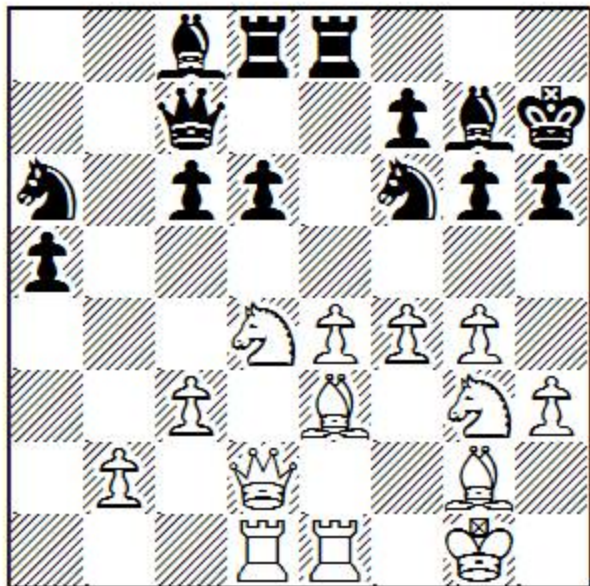
19 ... exd4?!

An admission that the battle has been lost. Black concedes the centre, after which he has nothing to hope for. But, according to Karpov, **19 ... a5 20 c3** or **19 ... c5 20 fxe5 dxe5 21 d5** was also hopeless.

20 Nxd4 a5

‘White’s subsequent play essentially reduces to preventing the opponent’s pieces from coming into the game.’ (Karpov)

21 c3 Na6



22 Qc2!

‘Probably the best move of the game, which by and large is an excellent illustration of Nimzowitsch’s idea about the overprotection of strategically important points. Here two forms of prophylaxis mentioned by Nimzowitsch are simultaneously combined – prevention of the opponent’s plans and overprotection.’ (Dvoretsky). White does not allow the black knight to come into play (22 ... Nc5 23 b4!) and he additionally supports his e4-pawn.

22 ... Bd7 23 Nf3! (again prophylaxis against ... Nc5) 23 ... Re7

In Karpov’s opinion, ‘23 ... Nc5 would not do because of 24 e5.’ Dvoretsky objects: ‘I don’t see how 24 ... Nd5 is refuted – after 25 Bxc5 dxc5 it is not easy for White to demonstrate his advantage: 26 Nh5 (Adianto) 26 ... Bh8 or 26 Qc1 (Nunn) 26 ... c4 27 Ne4 f6 28 Nd6 Rf8.’ However, after 26 Qe4! White’s position is clearly better (26 ... c4 27 Rd2), although Black can still resist.

And after 23 ... c5, in the words of Karpov, the knight at a6 would have the appearance of a living reproach.

24 Bf2!

‘One of the last prophylactic moves. Prior to his decisive offensive, White arranges his pieces in the most harmonious way possible and ... once again reinforces his central e4-forepost! 24 Qd3 was premature in view of 24 ... Bc8,’ writes Karpov. He can hardly have considered cooperative variations such as 25 e5? Nd5 26 exd6? Rxd6 27 c4? Rxe3! 28 Rxe3 Nxe3 29 Qxd6 Nxd1 and wins (Nunn), but he guessed that Timman wanted to play his bishop to e8, so he did not force ... Bc8, but made a useful waiting move, strengthening the threat of e4-e5.

24 ... Be8?!

In the words of Karpov, ‘a tactical mistake’. But I think it will be agreed that somehow you would not want to play 24 ... Bc8 voluntarily.

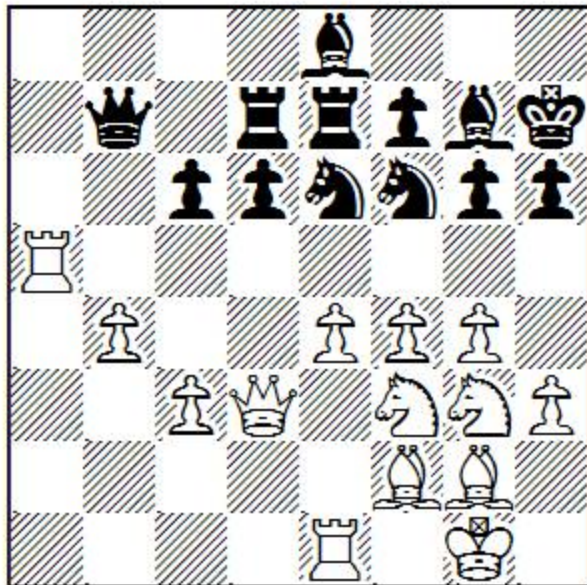
25 Qd3! Qb7 (25 ... Nb8? 26 e5 or 26 g5 and wins) 26 Ra1!

After lengthy manoeuvres in his half of the board, White again defers the start of the offensive, preferring to win material.

26 ... Nc7 (here, and also a move later, ... Qxb2? is not possible because of Reb1) **27 Rxa5**

Only the second crossing of the demarcation line (after 10 Bg5) has led to a completely won position for White: he is a pawn up and his pieces dominate, having squeezed the opponent’s main forces onto the last two ranks.

27 ... Rdd7 28 b4 Ne6



29 Be3!

Karpov again does not hurry, intending also to drive the knight onto the back rank. He rejected 29 Qd2, since 'after 29 ... d5!? Black have obtained something resembling counterplay: 30 e5 Ne4 31 Nxe4 dxe4 32 Nd4 c5, with complications.' Here too there were no saving chances: 33 Bxe4 Qb6 34 f5 or 33 bxc5 Qc7 34 Rea1 Nxc5 35 Qe3, but ... this was not enough for Karpov!

29 ... c5 30 f5 Nd8 31 b5

Not allowing the knight to go to c6. 'For "complete happiness" it only remains for White to play c3-c4, so as to achieve domination over the whole board.' (Karpov)

31 ... Kh8 32 Bf2

'The bishop has done its work at e3 and it again withdraws, to strengthen the e4-point.' (Dvoretsky)

32 ... Qc7 33 Ra4 Qb8 34 c4 Ra7 (there is no point in discussing 34 ... Ng8 35 h4) **35 Rxa7 Rxa7 36 e5! dxe5 37 Nxe5 Ra2 38 Bxc5 1-0**

A eulogy to prophylaxis!

By then defeating Spassky, Ljubojevic and Kavalek, the champion was leading the race after the first half of the tournament, but in the next round he missed a win on the 39th move against Hübner and was caught by Tal, who was playing brilliantly. Their sharp rivalry forced Karpov to play for a win against Timman also with Black.

'In this game probably the most significant novelty of the tournament occurred,' Karpov later stated. 'It had been prepared for Korchnoi, but somehow he deftly avoided this preparation. And then completely unexpectedly the variation "fired" at Timman.'

Game 79

J.Timman-A.Karpov

Montreal 1979, 11th round

English Opening A28

1 c4 Nf6 2 Nc3 e5 3 Nf3 Nc6 4 e3

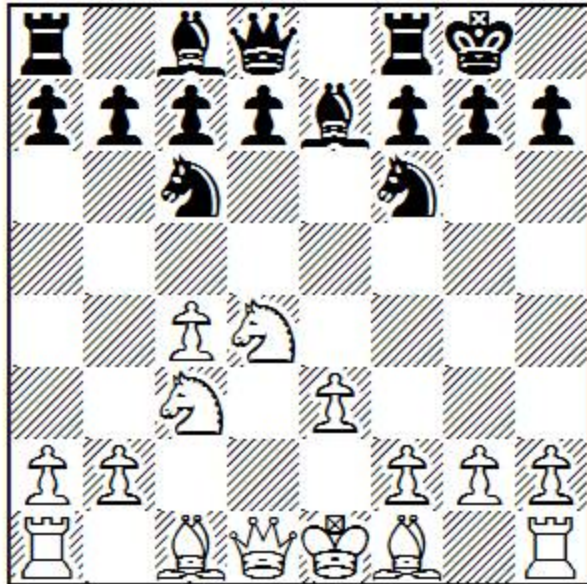
4 g3 Bb4 was intensively tested in Baguio, and therefore, not wishing to check the quality of the analytical work of Karpov's brigade, Timman is the first to deviate, hoping that his opponent's knowledge will be less detailed in other variations.

4 ... Be7

Meeting a surprise with a surprise! Karpov also turns along a rarely-used path, avoiding the main variation 4 ... Bb4 5 Qc2. Now in the

event of 5 ... 0-0 6 d3 Re8 7 Bd2 Bxc3 8 Bxc3 d5 9 cxd5 Nxd5 10 Be2 Bf5 Black has no problems (Ehlvest-Kasparov, Reykjavik 1988), but 6 Nd5! Re8 7 Qf5!? is more unpleasant for him – this original thrust was introduced by Keene back in 1977. Therefore instead of 5 ... 0-0 Black often parts with his bishop immediately: 5 ... Bxc3 6 Qxc3 Qe7 7 a3 a5 8 b3 d5 with equality (H.Olafsson-Karpov, Malta Olympiad 1980).

5 d4 exd4 6 Nxd4 0-0



7 Nxc6

After 7 Be2 all the same Black can play 7 ... d5!? with the idea of 8 cxd5 Nb4! Now, since 9 e4? fails to 9 ... Nxe4! 10 Nxe4 Qxd5, White has to be satisfied with equality – 9 Bf3! Nbx d5 10 Nxd5 Nxd5 11 0-0 Bf6 12 Qb3 Nb6 13 Rd1 (Miles-Timman, Portoroz 1979). Another promising reaction is 7 ... Bb4!? 8 0-0 Bxc3 9 bxc3 Re8 (the opponent of the famous maestro played much more weakly: 9 ... d5? 10 cxd5 Nxd5 11 Nxc6 bxc6 12 Qd4 Be6 13 Ba3 Rubinstein-E.Cohn, Pistyan 1912) 10 f3 Ne5 11 e4 d6, which also leads to a position from modern grandmaster practice (Azmaiparashvili-Anand, Dubai rapidplay 2002).

It is also worth mentioning the manoeuvre 7 Nde2 Re8 8 Nf4, restricting the activity of the d-pawn and thereby securing control of greater space: 8 ... Ne5 9 Be2 c6 10 0-0 a6 11 b3 b5 12 Bb2 d6 13 Qc2 (Timman-Miles, Bugojno 1984).

7 ... bxc6 8 Be2 d5 9 0-0 Bd6 10 b3

The preparatory exchange 10 cxd5 cxd5 makes the defects in Black's pawn structure less noticeable, and White no longer has any hopes of an opening advantage.

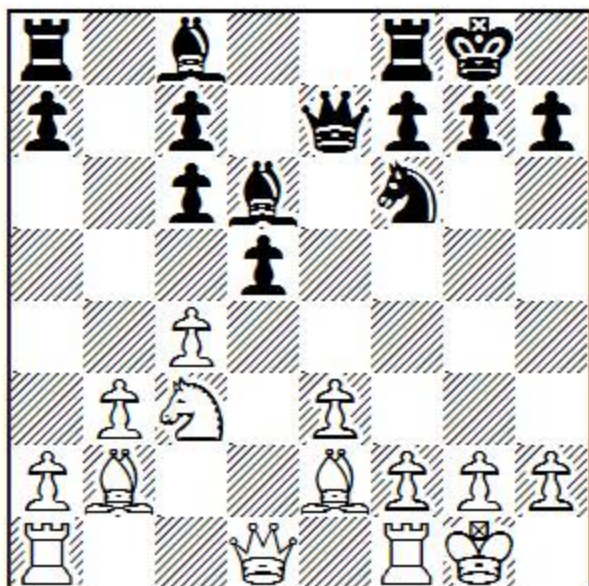
10 ... Qe7!

Karpov writes that 'all the indications are that Black is well placed both in the centre, and on both of the flanks', but what should especially alarm White is the absence of an important defender of his king – the knight at f3. Because of this he is soon forced to advance one of his pawns and weaken his king's defences.

11 Bb2

11 cxd5? loses the knight after 11 ... Qe5!, while if 11 Qc2, then 11 ... Qe5 12 f4 Qe7 looks good. The quiet development of the bishop would appear to help White avoid new problems, allowing him to hope for a successful defence on a restricted part of the board, where for the moment there are no targets to attack.

Tal: 'Opening books of recent years have unanimously evaluated the position after 11 Bb2 in favour of White. Karpov's simple but paradoxical reply forces this evaluation to be radically changed. Right to the end of the tournament the grandmasters analysed this continuation, seeking equality for White.'



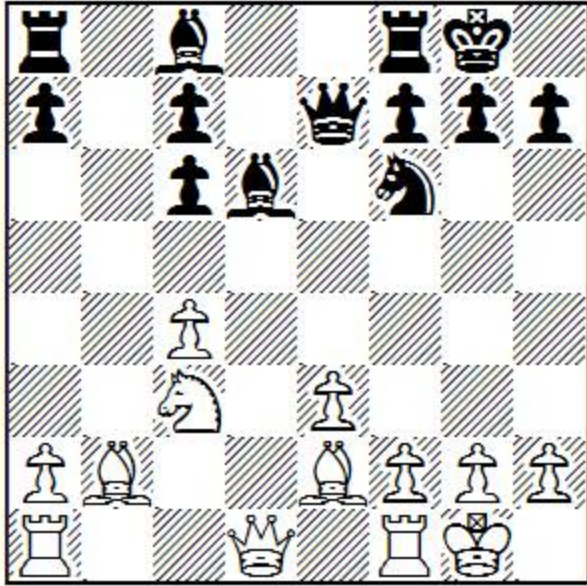
11 ... dxc4!

The author of this unexpected capture was Igor Zaitsev, who suggested this move to Karpov during the preparations for the match in Baguio. The idea of the novelty is to expand to the utmost the activity of the black pieces, which are successfully trained on the kingside. Zaitsev, who was famed for his non-routine chess vision, immediately saw that this main virtue of the strategically seemingly ridiculous exchange would more than cancel out its basic drawback – the complete break-up of the pawn structure.

12 bxc4?

Surprisingly, the very first independent move by White is the main cause of his defeat. Timman's choice is bad for the reason that the rook at a8 immediately comes into play, after which the white queen proves to be overloaded by defensive functions. In addition, Black acquires a new target to attack – the c4-pawn, the defence of which can again only be ensured by the queen.

But at the board it was not easy to decide on 12 Bxc4 – another defender moves away from the king. Here, apart from general considerations, concrete variations are also needed. The premature attack 12 ... Bxh2+? (but not Karpov's '!' sign) 13 Kxh2 Ng4+ quickly peters out: 14 Kg3 Qg5 15 f4 Qg6 16 Kf3 Re8 17 e4. The systematic offensive 12 ... Qe5 13 g3 Bh3 (Karpov) is also ineffective in view of 14 Re1 Rfd8 15 Qf3 with advantage to White. However, after 12 ... Ng4! 13 g3 Black can choose between forcing a draw – 13 ... Nxh2 (Karpov) 14 Kxh2 Qh4+ 15 Kg1 Bxg3 and continuing double-edged play: 13 ... Ne5!? 14 Be2 Bf5 15 e4 (15 Qd4? Bd3!) 15 ... Bh3 16 Re1 Bc5.

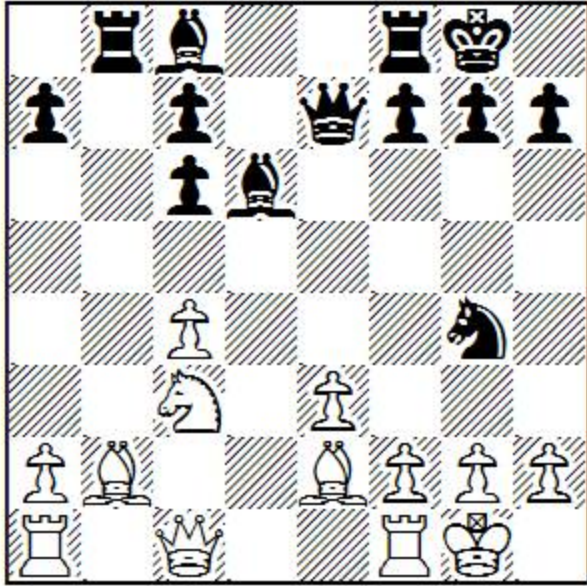


12 ... Rb8! 13 Qc1

It is not easy to defend the bishop: the simple-minded 13 Rb1? loses to 13 ... Rxb2 14 Rxb2 Qe5 (Karpov), but also after 13 Qc2 Qe5 14 g3 Bf5 15 Qc1 Qe6 16 Rd1 Ng4 Black's pressure is extremely unpleasant.

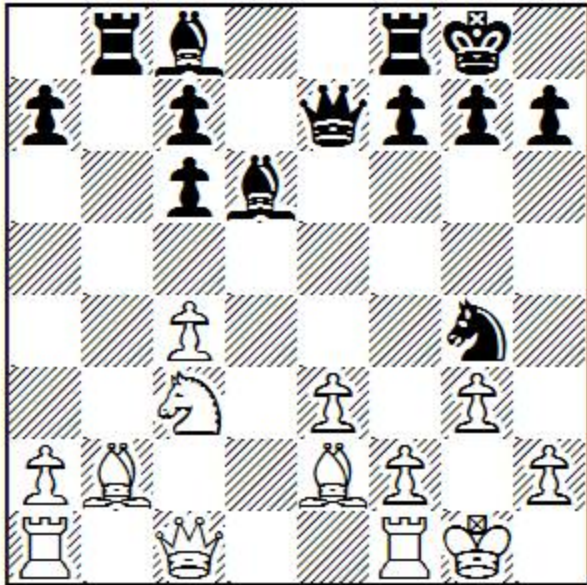
13 ... Ng4

'Black's attack develops easily and spontaneously. White has to follow the development of events on the kingside with anxiety.' (Karpov)



14 g3?!

White would have lost quickly after 14 h3? Qe5 15 g3 Nxf2! 16 Rxf2 Rxb2! 17 Qxb2 Qxg3+ 18 Rg2 Qxe3+ etc. But the exchange 14 Bxg4 Bxg4 was necessary, and now not 15 Re1 Rb4! (Kholmov), but 15 h3, hoping in the event of 15 ... Bf5 16 Ne2 Qg5 17 Nf4 to gradually neutralise the opponent's initiative, although after 15 ... Bh5! 16 Na4 (16 Re1 Qe5! 17 f4 Qe7) 16 ... c5 17 Bc3 Rfe8 it is not easy to do this.



14 ... Re8!

The immediate attack with sacrifices 14 ... Nxb2 15 Kxb2 Qh4+ 16 Kg2 Qh3+ 17 Kg1 Bxg3 18 fxg3 Qxg3+ 19 Kh1 seemed to Karpov to be sufficient only for a draw by perpetual check.

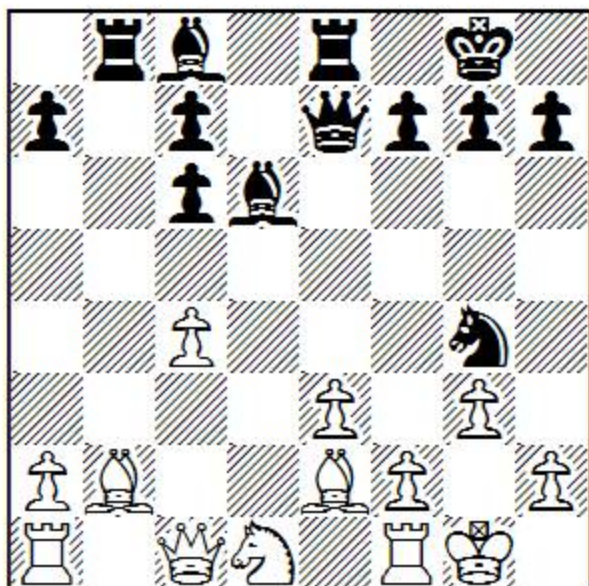
Indeed, the inclusion of the rook at e8 does not bring success: 19 ... Re8!? 20 Rf3! Qh4+ 21 Kg1! (the incautious 21 Kg2? would allow Black to break up the opponent's defences in computer-like style: 21 ... Re5! 22 Rg3 Bh3+! 23 Kf2 Rf5+ 24 Bf3 Bg4 25 Kg2 Bxf3+ 26 Rxf3 Rg5+ 27 Kf1 Qh1+ 28 Ke2 Qh5! 29 Ne4 Rg2+ 30 Nf2 Rg3 and wins) 21 ... Re6 22 Bf1 Rg6+ 23 Bg2 Bh3 24 Rxb3 Qxb3 25 Qd2, and Black must give perpetual check – 25 ... Rxb2+ 26 Qxb2 Qxe3+ 27 Kh2 Qh6+.

15 Nd1?

This allows a series of heavy blows, but 15 Bf3, as recommended by some commentators, also proves insufficient in view of 15 ... Qf6! 16 Bxg4 Bxg4 17 f3 Bh3 18 Rf2 Qg5! or 16 Bg2 Qh6 17 h4 (17 h3 Ne5 Karpov) 17 ... g5! 18 Bxc6 (18 e4 Bf4!) 18 ... gxh4! 19 e4 Qh5.

The comparatively best 15 Qc2 allows the standard attack 15 ... Nxb2 16 Kxb2 Qh4+ 17 Kg1 Bxg3 18 fxg3 Qxg3+ 19 Kh1 Re6! It appears to be time for White to resign, but he unexpectedly finds a possibility of prolonging the resistance, by taking play into an endgame where his extra piece provides little consolation: 20 Bh5! Rh6 21 Qh2

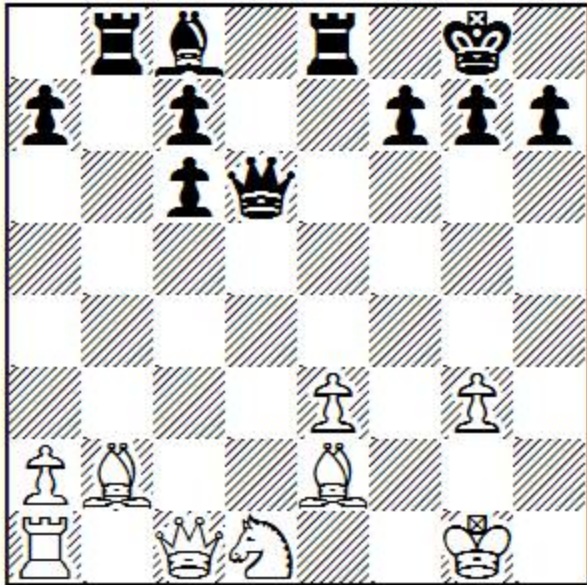
Qxh2+ 22 Kxh2 Rxh5+ 23 Kg1 Rxb2 24 Rad1! g6 25 Rd8+ Kg7 26 Rxc8 Rg5+ 27 Kh1 Rgg2 28 Rf4 Rgc2.



15 ... Nxh2! 16 c5 (16 Kxh2 is not possible on account of 16 ... Qh4+ 17 Kg1 Bxg3 18 fxg3 Qxg3+ 19 Kh1 Re4!) 16 ... Nxf1! 17 cxd6 Nxc3!

This spectacular finish to the raid by the knight into the opponent's rear, which was overlooked by Timman, deprives White of his last illusions.

18 fxg3 Qxd6



19 Kf2

After 19 Kg2 Karpov gives a win by 19 ... Qh6 20 g4 Qg5 21 e4 Qxc1 22 Bxc1 Rxe4 23 Nc3 Re8. I would have preferred 19 ... Qd5+ 20 Bf3 Bh3+ 21 Kf2 Qd3 22 Be2 Qf5+ 23 Ke1 c5 24 Qc3 Qg5, but the choice here is a matter of taste.

19 ... Qh6 20 Bd4 Qh2+

The fact that the game continued can be explained only by Timman's unwillingness to resign so early.

21 Ke1 Qxg3+ 22 Kd2 Qg2! 23 Nb2 Ba6 24 Nd3 Bxd3! 25 Kxd3 Rbd8 26 Bf1 Qe4+ 27 Kc3 c5! 28 Bxc5 Qc6 29 Kb3 Rb8+ 30 Ka3 Re5 31 Bb4 Qb6, and only here did White finally resign (0-1).

This is one of those wins that makes an especially terrible impression on professionals. Just think: to effectively win in 20 moves(!), in a harmless opening variation(!), and without any blunders by the opponent(!).

Karpov again became the sole leader, but, as often happens after an unusually emotional game, there came a temporary slump in his play. In the next round he unexpectedly lost with White to the tournament outsider Larsen, who surprised the champion after 1 e4 with the rare Scandinavian Defence – 1 ... d5 (incidentally, this was also played against me by Anand in the 14th game of our match, New York 1995). At the time the Dane gave this amusing explanation: 'Hort said

to me: “Well yes, you’re a Scandinavian!” I replied: “Yes, but this is simply a good variation of the Caro-Kann!” I think that against Karpov the idea of avoiding pawn weakenings is a good one.’

Indeed, Karpov defeated Larsen in the Caro-Kann both before this game – in Bugojno (1978), and many times after it – in Tilburg (1979 and 1982), Amsterdam (1980) and Linares (1983). But – regarding the question of unforgiving chess players! – as soon as the opportunity presented itself, he also gained convincing revenge on the Dane in the Scandinavian Defence (Mar del Plata 1982).

In the end the Montreal ‘Tournament of Stars’ concluded in a triumph for the world champion and the ex-world champion: 1-2. Karpov and Tal – 12 out of 18; 3. Portisch – 10½; 4. Ljubojevic – 9; 5-6. Spassky and Timman – 8½; 7-9. Hort, Hübner and Kavalek – 8; 10. Larsen – 5½.

‘This was not the best tournament in Karpov’s career, and yet he played better than anyone!’ Tal modestly remarked. ‘Karpov had Tal as his second, and Tal had Karpov as his second. It turned out that he trains me no worse than I train him.’ At that time the ex-champion had not yet abandoned the hope of again forcing his way through to a match for the world championship: soon afterwards he brilliantly won the Interzonal tournament in Riga.

For his part, over a period of two years Karpov won a whole series of tournaments, large and small, and every one of his rare defeats became a genuine sensation. Thus at the start of the European Team Championship in Skara (January 1980), where I made my debut for the USSR team, the champion suddenly lost with White to Miles, who replied to 1 e4 with the audacious 1 ... a6?! This was the Englishman’s sole success during the entire history of their encounters with the classical time control, Karpov scoring 12 wins against him, all with White (for one of them, see *Game No.87*).

In May 1980 Karpov set off with Tal and Polugayevsky to a super-tournament of 12 grandmasters in Bugojno. After his recent defeat at the hands of Polugayevsky in the Candidates match, it was no longer ‘the same’ Tal, but good form was demonstrated by Larsen. After seven rounds the leading positions were as follows: Larsen – 5½; Timman – 4½; Karpov and Polugayevsky – 4; Andersson, Ljubojevic and Tal – 3½. From this it is apparent just how important was the 8th round game between the world champion and his second.

On this occasion, obviously remembering his difficulties against Tal in the Sicilian Defence (*Game No.72*), Karpov decided again to 'serve from the other side' – and he gained an impressive win in what was then the most topical branch of the Meran Variation.

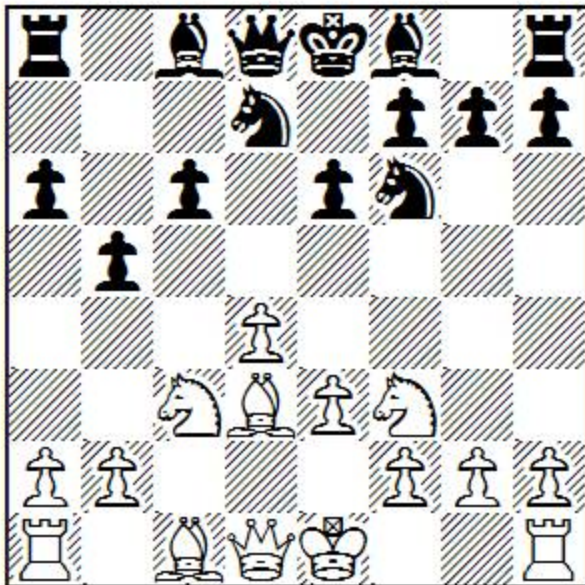
Game 80

A.Karpov-M.Tal

Bugojno 1980, 8th round

Semi-Slav Defence D48

1 c4 e6 2 Nc3 d5 3 d4 c6 4 e3 Nf6 5 Nf3 Nbd7 6 Bd3 (6 Qc2 – *Game Nos.101 and 102*) 6 ... dxc4 7 Bxc4 b5 8 Bd3 a6



It was hard for these players, closely tied by joint analytical work, having to fight each other. To engage in a theoretical dispute in public would be absurd, and so the grandmasters tried to surprise each other: Karpov avoided 1 e4, and Tal replied with an opening that was rare for him.

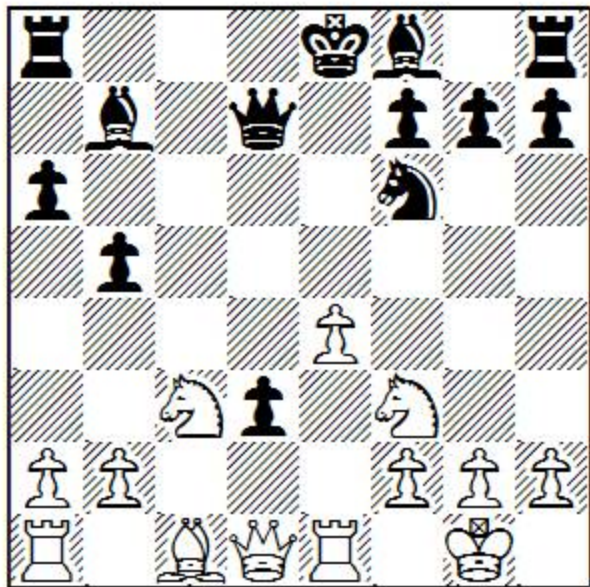
9 e4 c5 10 d5 c4 11 dxe6 cxd3

Black avoids 11 ... fxe6 (*Game No.103*) in favour of a less sharp move, which at the time was considered quite acceptable.

12 exd7+ Qxd7 13 0-0

‘A novelty. Usually 13 Bg5 or 13 e5 was played.’ (Karpov). After 13 e5 Nd5 14 Qxd3 practice has shown that White allows his opponent excellent counterplay on the light squares: 14 ... Nxc3 15 Qxc3 Bb7 16 0-0 Rc8 17 Qb3 Be7 etc.

13 ... Bb7 14 Re1



Reckoning that the d3-pawn is doomed, White does not force events by the advance of his e-pawn, but prepares more favourable conditions for future operations.

14 ... Bb4

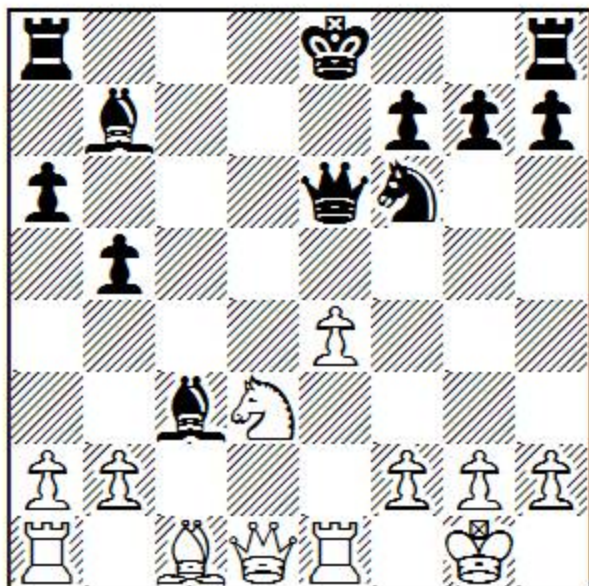
This move was abandoned after the present game, although the way things developed showed that Black's position was defensible. The following line remained under examination by theoreticians somewhat longer: 14 ... Be7 15 e5 Nd5 16 Ne4 0-0 17 Qxd3 Qg4. But in the end it transpired that after 18 Nfg5! the slight activity of Black's pieces does not compensate for his pawn deficit: 18 ... Rad8 19 a3 f5 20 exf6 gxf6 21 Qh3! Qxh3 22 Nxh3 Rfe8 23 Bd2 (Karpov-Lutz, Dortmund 1994), or 18 ... Rfd8 19 h3 Qh5 20 Ng3 Qg6 21 Qxg6 hxg6 22 a3 Rac8 23 Nf3 b4 24 Bg5 f6 25 exf6 gxf6 26 Bd2 (Piket-Shirov, Aruba 1995).

Since that time 11 ... cxd3 has been firmly confined to the 'archives', being considered less sharp and promising than its rival 11 ... fxe6.

15 Ne5 Qe6

Other moves are no better. For example, in the event of 15 ... Qc7 Black's activity comes to an end after 16 Bf4! Bxc3 17 Nxd3 Qd7 18 bxc3 Rd8 19 Re3 0-0 20 Bg5 with advantage.

16 Nxd3 Bxc3



17 Nf4!

A strong intermediate move, which allows White to fight for the initiative. After 17 bxc3 0-0-0 18 f3 Qc4 19 Re3 Ng4! 20 fxg4 Bxe4 21 Qe2 Bxd3 22 Qf3 Qc5 the best way out for him would probably be to force a draw – 23 Ba3 Qxa3 24 Qc6+.

17 ... Qd7

'It was bad to play 17 ... Qe5 18 bxc3 0-0 19 Nd3, when 19 ... Qxc3 fails to 20 Bb2.' (Karpov). But in my opinion, the centralisation of the queen and the regaining of the pawn would have allowed Black to hope for equality: 20 ... Qc6 21 Rc1 Qb6 22 Nc5 Rad8 23 Qf3 Bc8.

In addition, it is not clear whether White could have breached Black's defences after the queen sacrifice: 17 ... Bxe1 18 Nxe6 Bxf2+ 19 Kxf2 fxe6! (19 ... Nxe4+? 20 Kg1 fxe6 21 Qh5+! g6 22 Qe5) 20 e5 Ne4+ 21 Kg1 0-0.

18 bxc3 Nxe4

The other way of exchanging queens is dubious – 18 ... Qxd1 19 Rxd1, after which White has a forced way to retain his extra pawn: 19 ... Nxe4 20 Ba3 (Karpov) 20 ... Rd8 21 Re1! Kd7 22 f3 Nd6 23 Rad1

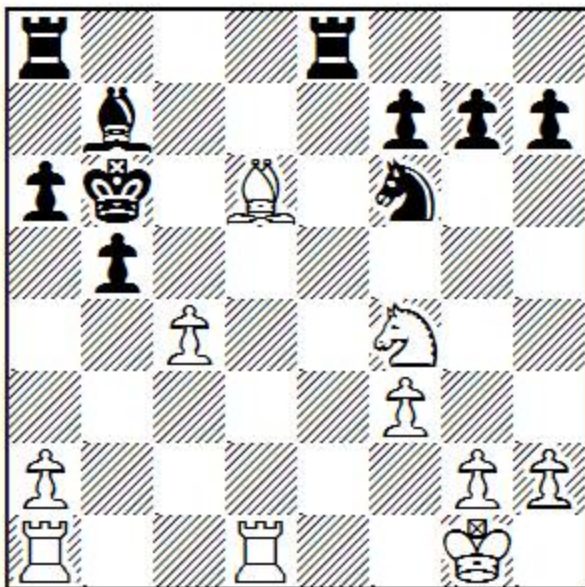
Kc6 24 Ne6! fxe6 25 Rxe6. Since Black cannot exchange all the rooks, White retains winning chances: 25 ... Rhe8 26 Rxe8 Rxe8 27 Rxd6+ Kc7 28 Kf2 Rd8 29 Re6 Rd2+ 30 Kg3 Rxa2 31 Bf8 g6 32 Re7+ Kb6 33 Rxh7.

19 Qxd7+ Kxd7 20 Ba3 Rhe8 21 Red1+ Kc7 22 f3

Now the knight has to retreat, and not to d6, but to a position from where it will be unable to help the king.

22 ... Nf6 23 Bd6+! Kb6 24 c4!

Signalling the start of the attack. The black king feels uncomfortable, despite the absence of the queens.



24 ... Rac8?

Now the king is completely deprived of its pawn protection, and the white rooks become rampant.

Hopes of saving the game were offered by 24 ... bxc4!, preserving the a6-pawn. In this case the king would still have had something resembling a shelter. Karpov gives the short variation 25 Rab1+ Kc6 26 Rb4 with the evaluation '±', but after 26 ... Rac8! 27 a4! g5! White has nothing better than 28 Rxc4+ Kb6 29 Bc7+! Ka7 30 Rd6, after which there follows the new exchanging operation 30 ... Ne4! 31 fxe4 gxf4 32 Rd7 Rxe4 33 Rxe4 Bxe4 34 Rxf7 Kb7 35 Bxf4+ Kb6, taking play into an endgame where Black has good chances of a draw.

A stronger reply to 24 ... bxc4 25 Rab1+ Kc6 is 26 Rd4! with the idea of continuing the attack, for example: 26 ... Rac8 27 Ba3 Kc7 28 Rxc4+ Kb8 29 Rcb4 Rc7 30 Bb2 Kc8 31 Bxf6 gxf6 32 Rb6 etc. Here 26 ... Red8! is a better defence. After 27 Rb4 Rxd6 28 Rdxc4+ Kd7 29 Rxb7+ Ke8 30 Rcc7 Rd7 White retains the initiative, but Black still has real chances of saving the game.

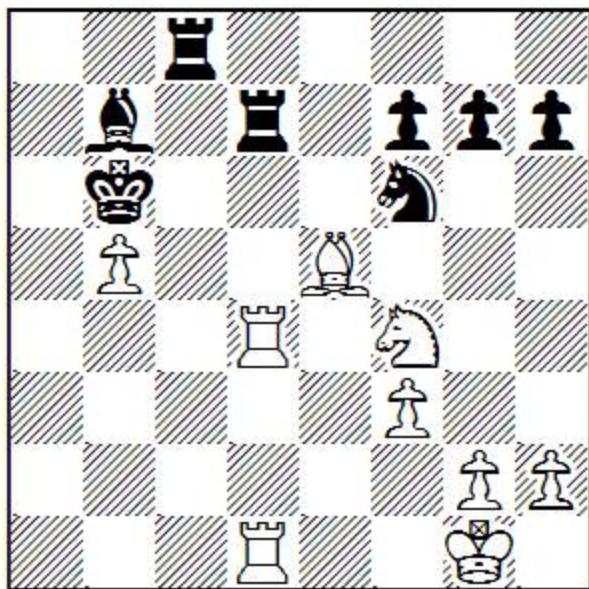
25 cxb5 axb5 26 a4! Rcd8 27 axb5

Karpov consistently carries out his plan. The black king is covered against rook attacks by the enemy pawn, but White finds a way of getting rid of it. However, the elegant 27 Rac1! Rd7 28 Bc7+! would have transformed this pawn into an active participant in the attack, ensuring an easy win: 28 ... Ka7 29 Rxd7 Nxd7 30 axb5.

27 ... Rd7 (it is not possible to drive the knight away: 27 ... g5 28 Rac1! Rd7 29 Bc7+! Kxb5 30 Rb1+) **28 Rd4 Red8 29 Rad1 Rc8**

Again 29 ... g5 is not possible, this time because of 30 Be7! Rxd4 31 Bxd8+ (Karpov).

30 Be5



30 ... Re7

Black had a dismal choice between a hopeless endgame – 30 ... Rxd4 31 Bxd4+ Kxb5 32 Bxf6 gxf6 33 Rd7 (Karpov) and the suicidal exposure of his king, which Tal preferred.

31 Rd6+ Kxb5 32 Rb1+ Kc4 33 Rd4+ (as the computer indicates, 33 Rd2 would have mated more quickly) 33 ... Kc5 34 Nd3+ 1-0

In view of unavoidable mate, Black resigned.

In the next round the champion defeated Timman with Black in good style (a Ruy Lopez, the Zaitsev Variation which had come into fashion – 9 ... Bb7 10 d4 Re8), and then won ‘to order’ against Kavalek and Gligoric. Four successive wins – and all his rivals were left behind: 1. Karpov – 8 out of 11; 2. Larsen – 7½; 3. Timman – 6½, etc.

A month and a half later the double-round IBM tournament of eight players began in Amsterdam. Before it started Larsen and Timman declared that they would fight for first place and ‘put an end to Karpov’s victories’. And whereas Larsen, who was out of form, ended up at the bottom of the tournament table, Timman kept his promise and competed with the champion right to the finish.

Karpov arrived at this tournament with one of the new hopes of Soviet chess, the 1978 world junior champion Sergey Dolmatov. The young player’s repertoire included the fashionable Chelyabinsk Variation of the Sicilian Defence. Dolmatov, naturally, also employed it against Karpov. This instructive game requires a short introduction.

The peak of Karpov’s strength coincided with the rapid development of the Chelyabinsk Variation, but the champion’s suffocating style scared off Black players from the thought of employing this strategically risky set-up against him. The game with Dolmatov confirmed these fears, and for a long time it made grandmasters unwilling to play this against Karpov. Only in 1994 did Lautier venture to do this and he easily gained a draw, but by that time Karpov would only rarely begin a game with 1 e4.

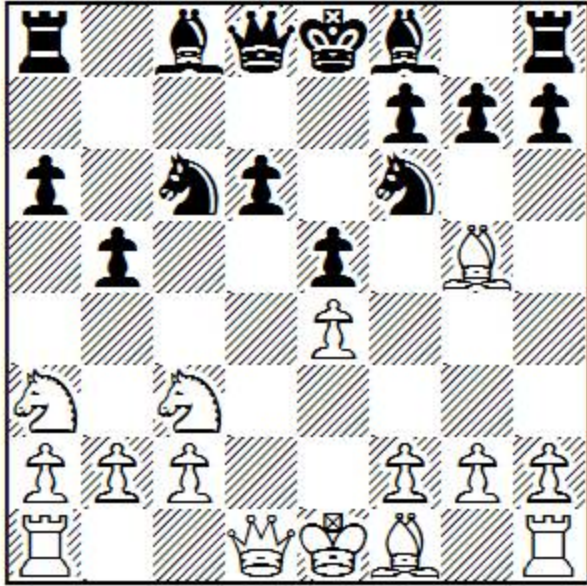
Game 81

A.Karpov-S.Dolmatov

Amsterdam 1980, 5th round

Sicilian Defence B33

1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Nf6 5 Nc3 e5 6 Ndb5 d6 7 Bg5 a6 8 Na3 b5



A *tabiya* of the Chelyabinsk Variation. Its development will be described in detail in Volume 6.

9 Nd5

Karpov employed only this variation, which is strategically the most solid. He played four games with it and won two of them, one on the 101st(!) move against Yurtaev in 1979.

9 ... Be7 10 Bxf6 Bxf6 11 c3 0-0 12 Nc2 Rb8

At that time this rook move, inhibiting the undermining advance a2-a4, was considered to be an important subtlety, since the position after 12 ... Bg5 13 a4 bxa4 14 Rxa4 was judged to favour White.

13 Be2 (when playing 12 ... Rb8, in the first instance Black must be prepared for 13 h4! – cf. Volume 6) **13 ... Bg5 14 0-0 Be6**

14 ... a5 is deemed to be more accurate, depriving the white knight of the b4-square and preparing to contest the outpost at d5 by ... Nc6-e7.

15 Qd3 Qd7

A natural development of the queen with the aim of connecting the rooks, but here too 15 ... a5 was better.

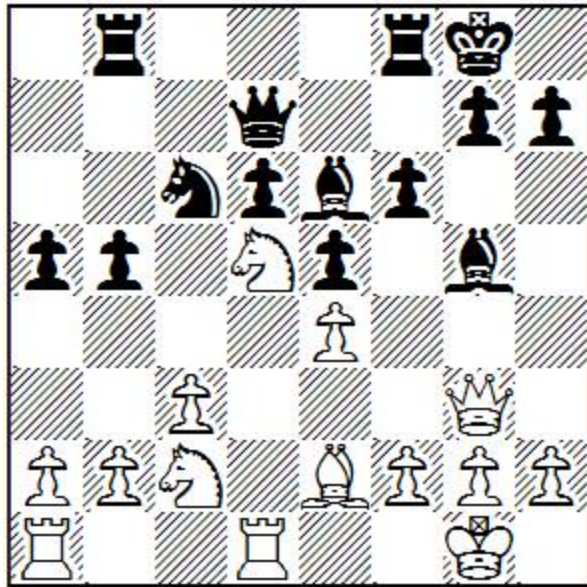
16 Qg3! f6?!

Persisting in his aim to keep control of the e3-square, Black goes in for a completely unnecessary weakening of the light squares and in addition he deprives his bishop of the excellent route g5-d8-b6.

Meanwhile, 16 ... Bd8 17 Nce3 g6 was quite possible, deferring the exchange of this bishop until better times.

17 Rfd1 a5

Now this advance, which literally a move ago promised definite counterplay, is no longer effective.



18 Na3!

An excellent and unexpected decision! The bishop is watching for the appearance of the knight at e3, in order to promptly exchange it, and so the knight goes a different way. For a player who blindly believes in the classical rules, it is hard to imagine that the return of the knight to the edge of the board is the strongest continuation. By beginning a battle on the queenside, White forces his opponent to gradually turn to passive defence.

18 ... Na7

The further pawn advance on the queenside – 18 ... b4 would merely have worsened Black's position after 19 Nc4 bxc3 20 bxc3: his bishop is cut off from d8, and the white rook already stands at d1.

19 h3! (the planned exchange of the light-squared bishops is clearly advantageous to White) **19 ... Kh8**

It should be said that Black's inaccurate play in the opening has by no means led to an immediate strategic fiasco, since there are no obvious weaknesses in his position and all that is evident is not too

great a difference in the activity of the pieces. But from this moment the game is transformed into a splendid, textbook example of how to break down the opponent's defences by the accumulation of small pluses. In such work for a long time Karpov had no equals!

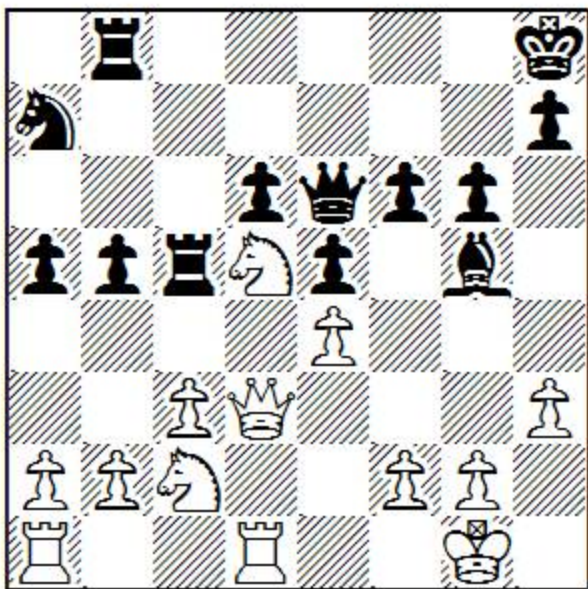
20 Bg4! Rfc8?!

Nevertheless Black should have played 20 ... f5 and, after bringing his bishop into play (but not exchanging it for a knight), set up a defence after the exchanges 21 exf5 Bxf5 22 Nc2 Bxg4 23 Qxg4 Qxg4 24 hxg4. Although White still holds the initiative, it is not at all easy for him to achieve anything real, for example: 24 ... Nc6 25 Nce3 g6 26 a4 Ne7 27 Nxe7 Bxe7 28 b4 axb4 29 cxb4 bxa4 30 Rxa4 Rf7 31 Nd5 Bg5, and the limited amount of material remaining allows Black to hope for a draw.

21 Bxe6 Qxe6 22 Qd3! Rc5?!

Again a natural and rather weak manoeuvre, allowing White to begin active play. The immediate 22 ... g6 was better. All the same Black cannot get by without his thematic move, preparing ... f6-f5.

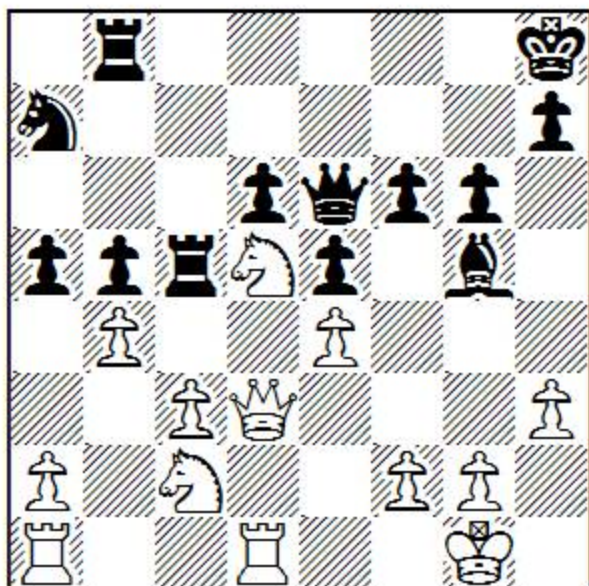
23 Nc2 g6



24 b4!

Karpov begins a new and far from obvious operation, aimed at removing the pawn obstructions on the queenside and clearing the way

for his rook. He has already outlined the contours of the future offensive.



24 ... axb4 25 Ncxb4 Rb7 26 a4! bxa4 27 Rxa4 f5 28 Ra6! Nc8

Black has to retreat, since the active 28 ... Nb5 would have allowed the white pieces to approach the king along the undefended 8th rank: 29 Ra8+ Kg7 30 Na6 Rc8 31 exf5! (choosing the right moment for this exchange enables the king's fortress to be weakened even more) 31 ... gxf5 32 Rxc8 Qxc8 33 Rb1! Ra7 34 Qxb5 Qxa6 35 Qb8! Therefore Dolmatov blocks the dangerous line with his knight.

29 Ra8 Kg7

A new phase of the battle begins. To win, White must find a way to break up the opponent's still solid defences.

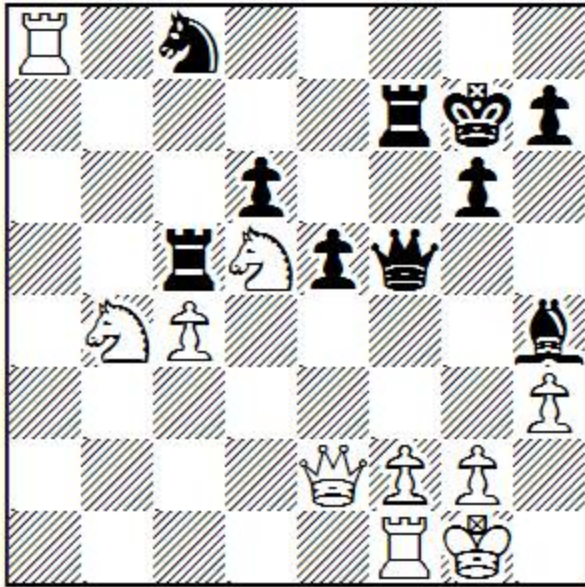
30 Qe2

30 Qa6! Qd7 31 exf5! was more energetic, forcing Black to take with the pawn, which weakens his king's shelter: 31 ... gxf5 32 Qd3 Qf7 33 Rda1.

30 ... fxe4

This capture breaks up Black's pawn chain and creates the danger of increasing the opponent's domination on the light squares (which in fact happened in the end). But the exchange of knights 30 ... Ne7 31 Nxe7 Bxe7 would also not have eased Black's position, since the key d5-square would again be occupied by a knight – 32 Nd5 Bg5 33 c4.

31 Qxe4 Qf5 32 Qe2 Rf7 33 c4 Bh4 34 Rf1



34 ... Ne7

According to Dvoretsky, this is a definite positional mistake: 'Why exchange the "superfluous" white knight at b4? True, after 34 ... e4!? (with the idea of ... Qe5-d4) many years later Yuri Yakovich pointed out a very strong reply: 35 Ra3! (threatening Re3), and if 35 ... Bg5, then 36 f4! (not 36 f3 Qe5) 36 ... Bf6 37 g4 Qe6 38 Kh1 followed by 39 Re3. Therefore Black does better to restrict himself to the waiting move 34 ... Bg5!, and if 35 Rfa1, then either continue waiting tactics (35 ... h5; 35 ... Bh4), or nevertheless play 35 ... e4!?, not fearing 36 Re1 Bh4 37 Qb2+ Qe5 38 Qxe5+ dxe5 39 g3 Bf6 40 Nxf6 Rxf6 41 Rxe4 Nd6 with a probable draw.'

In my view, retaining the linkage of the white knights would also have threatened Black with serious unpleasantness. Thus if 34 ... Bg5 35 Rfa1 e4 36 Re1 Bh4, then 37 g3 Bd8 38 Nc2 is very strong, when the 'superfluous' knight successfully comes into play: 38 ... Ba5 39 Nce3 Qxh3 40 Qb2+ Kg8 41 Ra1 Bd8 42 Qd4. White's total domination in the centre, combined with the activity of his rooks, makes Black's position barely defensible, for example: 42 ... Qe6 43 R1a6! Qe5 44 Qxe5 dxe5, and a sudden leap by the knight decides the game – 45 Nc3! Bg5 46 Nxe4 Bxe3 47 Nxc5 Rxf2 48 Ne4! Things are also difficult for Black after 35 ... Bh4 (instead of 35 ... e4) 36 g3 Bd8 (the

piece sacrifice 36 ... Qxh3 is insufficient: 37 gxh4 Qxh4 38 Ne3 Nb6 39 R8a7) 37 h4.

35 Ra6

The immediate 35 Nxe7 Bxe7 36 Nd5 would have allowed Black to bring his rook, stuck at c5, back into play – 36 ... Rc8!

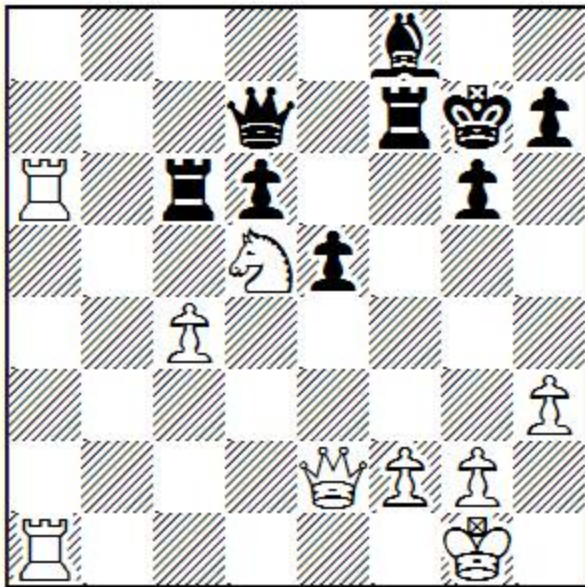
35 ... Qd7?

This move suggests itself, but it deserves serious criticism – Black is unable to hold out by passive play. The best practical chance was the pawn sacrifice 35 ... Nxd5 36 Nxd5 e4! 37 Rxd6 Qe5 38 Ra6 Qd4, activating the pieces with chances of a draw.

36 Qe4 Nxd5 37 Nxd5 Be7 38 Rfa1 Bf8

Black can no longer activate his game – 38 ... Qf5 39 Qe2 Bh4 40 g3.

39 Qe2 Rc6



40 R6a3!

Karpov's ability to see the entire board is staggering. After doubling rooks on the a-file, he suddenly sharply changes the direction of the attack and makes an unexpected manoeuvre, which decisively strengthens his position. Since Black does not have a more useful move than the return of his rook to c5, White removes the rook at f7 from the game, thereby weakening the defence of the king. His other rook can now threaten not only to invade on the a-file, but also to switch

to the kingside via a3 and f3. What becomes noticeable here is the dominating role of the knight at d5, which prevents the rook at c5 from returning in time to the aid of its king, leaving it performing the role of an observer.

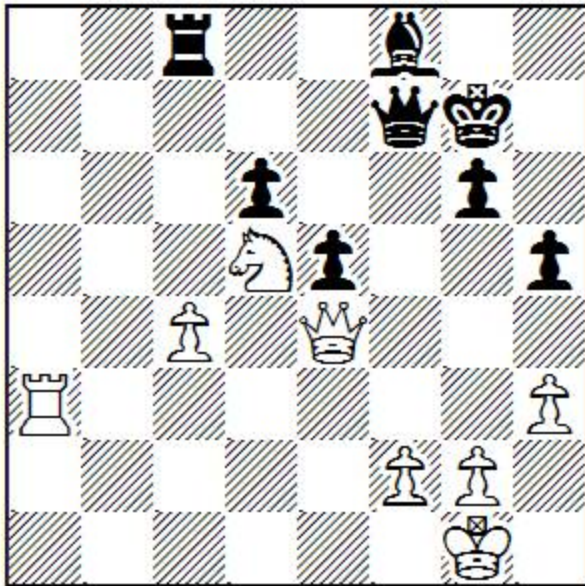
40 ... Rc5 41 Rf3! Rxf3 42 Qxf3 Qf7 43 Qg4 h5

Black is forced to go in for this new weakening, in order to safeguard his monarch.

44 Qe4 Rc8

After 44 ... Kh7 a shuttle raid by the rook concludes the battle: 45 Ra3 Bg7 46 g4! Qd7 47 Rf3! (the technical endgame after 47 gxh5 Qf5 48 hxg6+ Qxg6+ 49 Qxg6+ Kxg6 50 Rg3+ Kf7 51 Rg4 is too small a reward for such a successful campaign) 47 ... hxg4 48 hxg4 Qe6 49 Ra3! Qf7 50 Rf3 Qe8 (50 ... Qe6 51 Nf6) 51 Rf6! Nothing is changed by 44 ... Kh6 45 Ra8 Bg7 46 g4!

45 Ra3



45 ... Qf5

This prevents the invasion of the rook on the f-file, but it now strikes a blow from the opposite flank. After 45 ... Rb8 46 Rf3 the counter-invasion 46 ... Qb7 47 Kh2 Qb1 is ineffective: 48 Qh4 Qc1 49 Qf6+ Kh7 50 Qf7+ Bg7 51 Qc7 Rb1 52 Rf7 Qg1+ 53 Kg3 Rb3+ 54 f3 h4+ 55 Kxh4 Qf2+ 56 g3 and wins. After 46 ... Qd7 47 Rf6 Qe8 the win of the queen by 48 Nc7 Kxf6 49 Qf3+ Ke7 50 Nxe8 Rxe8 gives Black

hopes of setting up a fortress, but the energetic 48 f4! quickly forces capitulation: 48 ... exf4 49 Re6 Qf7 50 Nxf4.

And in the event of 46 ... Qe6 (perhaps the toughest defence) White should not win either the queen (47 Rf6 Qxf6), or a pawn (47 Nf4 Qf5 48 Qxf5 gxf5 49 Nxh5+ Kg6 with counterplay). After 47 Qh4! e4 (47 ... Rb7 48 Rf6 Be7 49 Rxe6 Bxh4 50 g3) 48 Re3 Qe5 49 Qxe4 the win is technically simple.

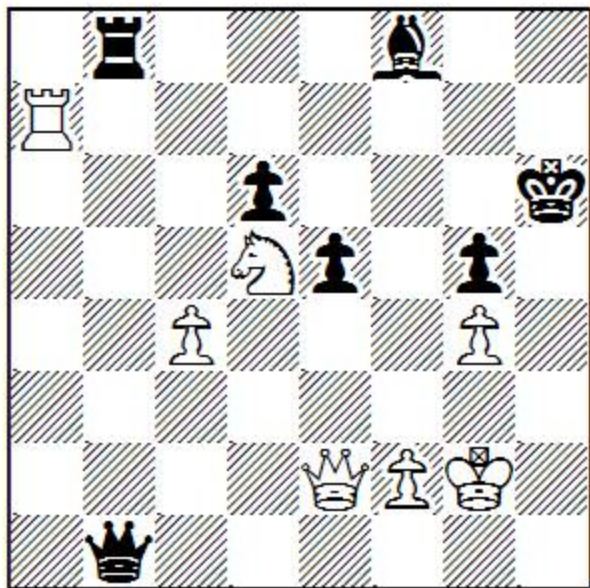
46 Ra7+ Kh6

If 46 ... Kh8 the elegant tactical blow 47 Nf6! is decisive, taking play into a simply won queen endgame: 47 ... Qxf6 (47 ... Bg7 48 Qb7 Qxf6 49 Qxc8+ is also hopeless) 48 Qb7! Qg7 49 Qxc8 Qxa7 50 Qxf8+ Kh7 51 Qxd6.

47 Qe3+ g5 48 Qe2 Rb8 49 g4! hxg4?!

Even so, Black should not have opened the h-file. The immediate 49 ... Qb1+ 50 Kg2 Rb7 51 Rxb7 Qxb7 was more tenacious, although after 52 Qf3 Bg7 53 gxh5 the game would have gone into an endgame where Black has no way of opposing his opponent's light-squared domination.

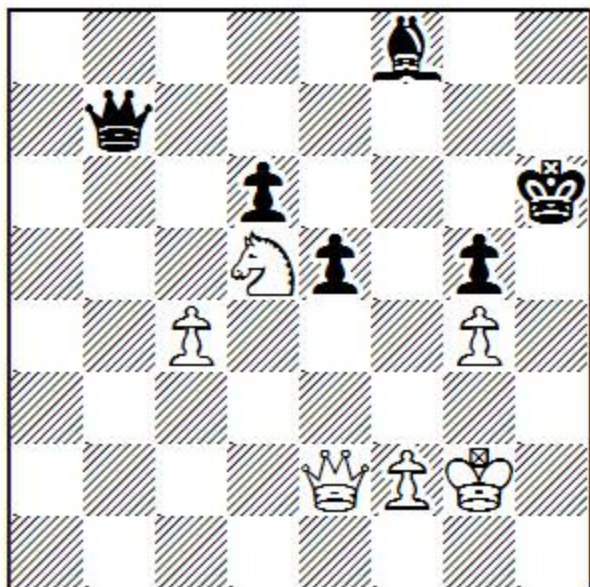
50 hxg4 Qb1+ 51 Kg2



The black queen has been sidelined, White has acquired an outpost at f5 for his knight, and the route a7-a3-h3 is open for the rook. It is not possible to weaken the terrible effect of this manoeuvre by 51 ...

e4 52 Ra3 Kg6, since after 53 c5! Black cannot take the pawn (53 ... dxc5? 54 Qa6+!), and 53 ... Rc8, the only seemingly acceptable continuation, allows a pretty concluding attack: 54 Qc4! Rxc5 55 Qd4! Bg7 56 Ne7+ Kf7 57 Qxd6 etc. Therefore Black's desire to exchange rooks is logical and appears to be a measure that eases his position.

51 ... Rb7 52 Rxb7 Qxb7



53 Qf3!

It transpires that the black queen is unable to come to the aid of its king on account of a trivial mate: 53 ... Qg7 54 Qh3+ Kg6 54 Qh5. There are hardly any pieces left on the board, but the difference in the strengths of the two small armies is such that the battle concludes immediately.

53 ... Qc8 54 Qf6+ Kh7 55 Qf7+ 1-0

If 55 ... Kh8, then 56 Nf6 is decisive, while if 55 ... Kh6 – 56 Ne3.

In the next round Karpov lost with Black to Ribli, and the second half of the tournament developed into a sharp race with Timman. In the penultimate, 13th round the champion had White against Ribli and, taking account of the tournament situation, was eager for immediate revenge.

And – very typical of Karpov – again the result was a textbook example on the accumulation of minute advantages combined with

inexorably increasing pressure, which in the end broke the opponent's will to resist.

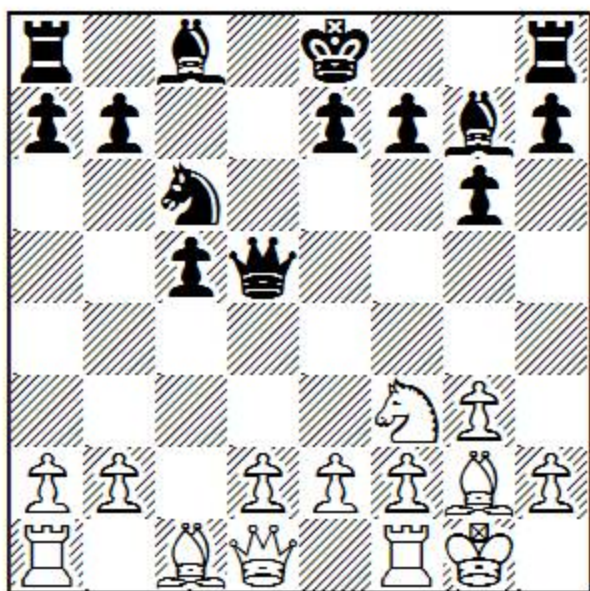
Game 82

A.Karpov-Z.Ribli

Amsterdam 1980, 13th round

English Opening A38

1 c4 (again serving from the left!) 1 ... c5 2 Nf3 Nf6 3 Nc3 Nc6 4 g3 d5 5 cxd5 Nxd5 6 Bg2 g6 7 0-0 Bg7 8 Nxd5 Qxd5



This variation, which is not without venom, is one that Karpov played with both colours, and he had an excellent knowledge of its subtleties.

9 d3 0-0 10 Be3 Bd7!

This move (instead of the earlier 10 ... Qd6), which first occurred in the game Timman-Olafsson (Amsterdam 1976), forced it to be admitted that here there are no particular difficulties for Black. After seeing it at the board, Karpov immediately remembered how the source game had gone and, after some thought, devised a novelty (see below).

11 Nd4

Standing at d5, the queen keeps the a2-pawn under fire, not allowing the white rook to come into play. But it cannot advantageously

be driven away: 11 Nd2 Qh5, or 11 Ng5 Qe5. Interesting complications can arise unexpectedly quickly for such an colourless set-up after 11 Qc1 b6 12 d4 cxd4 13 Nxd4 Nxd4 14 Bxd5 Nxe2+ 15 Kg2 Nxc1 16 Bxa8 Bxb2 17 Rb1 Bf6! 18 Rfxc1 Rxa8, and the situation is discharged (Bagirov-Tukmakov, Tbilisi 1978).

11 ... Qd6 12 Nxc6 (12 Nb5 Qe5) 12 ... Bxc6 13 Bxc6 Qxc6 14 Rc1 Qe6

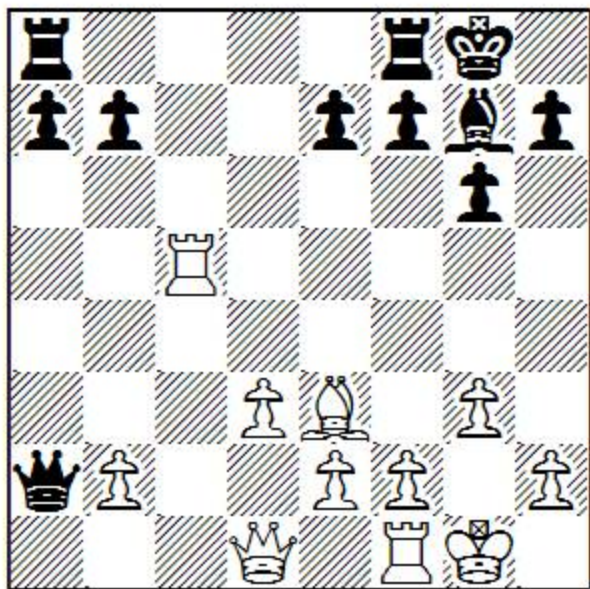
The critical position. Black is threatening to consolidate by 15 ... b6, and White cannot defer the capture of the c5-pawn.

15 Rxc5

Black has no problems after 15 Bxc5 Bxb2 (or 15 ... Qxa2 16 Bxe7 Re8 17 Ba3 Bxb2 with equality – Karpov) 16 Rb1 Bg7 17 a4 Rfd8 18 Be3 b6 19 Qd2 Rd5 (Timman-Olafsson, Amsterdam 1976).

15 ... Qxa2

Karpov considers the position after 15 ... Bxb2 16 Rb5 Bf6 17 Qa4 to be favourable for White. After 17 ... Qd7 18 Ra5 Qxa4 19 Rxa4 Rfc8 20 Rb1 b6, as in the game, Black would have had to defend an inferior endgame.



16 Rb5!?

‘An innovation, thought up by me during the game.’ (Karpov). It does not claim to refute Black’s opening set-up, but it sets him new problems.

16 ... b6

An acceptable reaction, but not the best. There was a clearer way to equalise – 16 ... Qa6! 17 Qb3 b6 18 Rb4 Rfc8 19 Ra4 Qb7 20 Rfa1 h5! (Ehlvest-Polugayevsky, Reggio Emilia 1991), or 18 ... Rfb8 19 Rc4 b5 20 Rc7 e6 21 Rfc1 h5 with an unclear game (Andersson-Timman, Ubeda 1997).

17 Qa1!

Exploiting the fact that, with the pawn on b2, the a1-square is inaccessible to the black bishop, White wants to tie the rook at a8 to the defence of the a7-pawn. If this rook were able to switch to the 7th rank, the conflict would be exhausted.

17 ... Qxa1?

With the aim of ‘drying’ the play and concluding peace as soon as possible, Black condemns himself to suffering in a position where his best option will already be to go into a rook endgame a pawn down. Undoubtedly ‘17 ... Qe6 was preferable’ (Karpov) – with the queens on it is easier to hold such a position: 18 Qa4 Rfc8 19 Rb4 Qd5 20 Ra1 Qh5 (Hansen-Sutovsky, Esbjerg 2001).

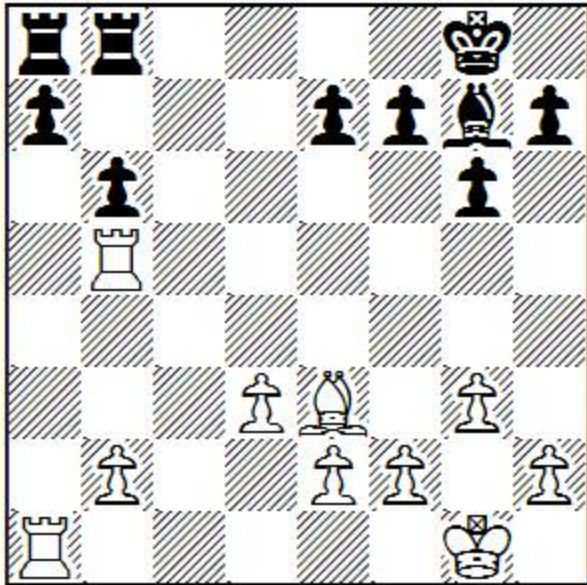
Of course, when analysing the position in a calm situation, one can resolve the simple problems posed by 16 Rb5 without particular difficulty. But at the board Zoltan Ribli was unable to find the correct way, although at that time, at the peak of his career, he was famed for his subtle positional understanding.

18 Rxa1

It transpires that Black lacks a tempo to prevent the invasion of the rook at a6, which is extremely unpleasant with his rook on a8. Suddenly he finds himself in difficulties.

18 ... Rfb8

Ribli adopts a passive stance, intending to finally remove the rook from a8 after 19 ... Rb7. There is nothing for this rook to do on the open c-file: 18 ... Rfc8 19 Ra6! Rc2 20 b3 Rxe2 21 Rbxb6 (Karpov) 21 ... Re1+ 22 Kg2 Ra1 23 Rxa1 Bxa1 24 Ra6.



19 Ra6!

Now 19 ... Rb7 leads to the loss of a pawn and an extremely unpleasant rook and bishop endgame: 20 Rbxb6! Rxb6 21 Bxb6 Bxb2 22 d4! e5 23 d5.

19 ... Kf8 20 Rb4! Be5 21 Rba4!

Subtle. 'If 21 b3 Black would manage to defend – 21 ... Bc7 22 Rba4 Rb7.' (Karpov)

21 ... b5?

The decisive mistake. Now the transition into the difficult endgame '5 against 4' becomes a dream, the fulfilment of which depends entirely on White's desire. According to Karpov, '21 ... Bxb2 22 Bxb6 Rb7 23 Bxa7 Rc8 should have been preferred, when it is not at all easy for White to win this endgame.'

22 Ra2 Rb7 23 b3!

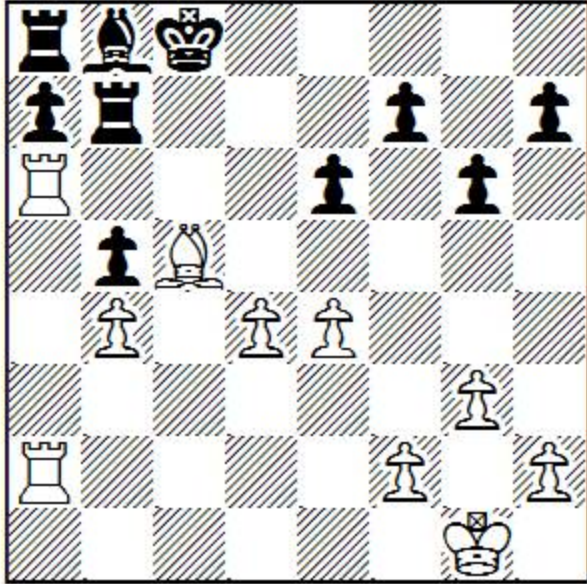
A warning signal for Black. Rather than the immediate win of a pawn by 23 Bxa7 Bxb2 24 Rxb2 Rxa7 25 Rxa7 Rxa7 26 Rxb5, Karpov prefers positional pressure, continuing to wear down his opponent.

23 ... Bb8 24 Bc5 (now Black has also been deprived of the c-file) **24 ... Ke8 25 d4 Kd7 26 e4!**

Karpov: 'A fairly committing decision, which demanded deep calculation. After 26 d5 Black could have been forced to go into a rook

endgame – 26 ... Bd6 27 Bxd6 exd6, which looks completely won for White.’ But he justifiably wanted more.

26 ... e6 (the black bishop can no longer go to d6) 27 b4 Kc8

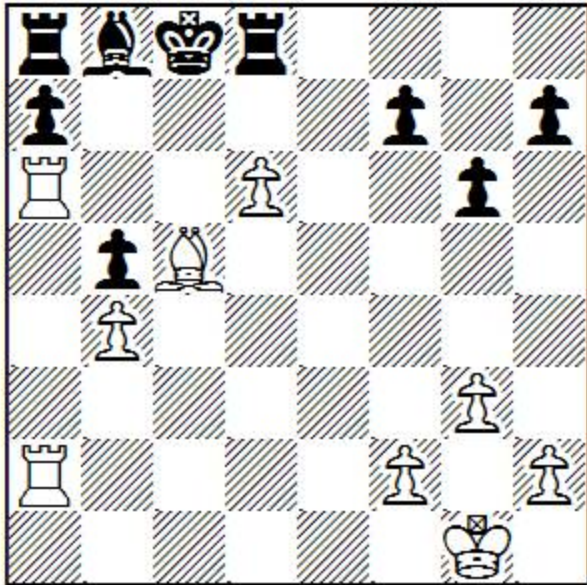


28 d5!

Karpov ‘did not care for 28 Kg2 Rd7 29 R6a5 Bd6! 30 Rxb5 Bxc5 31 Rxc5+ Kd8!, when White’s king does not manage to defend his far-advanced pawns.’ Indeed, in the rook endgame after 32 d5 exd5 33 Rxd5 Rxd5 34 exd5 Black acquires a ray of hope: 34 ... a6 35 Kf3 Rb8 36 Rxa6 Rxb4.

28 ... exd5 29 exd5 Rd7 (not 29 ... Be5? because of 30 Re2 – Karpov) 30 d6 Rd8

Black’s pieces are stalemated, and now the white king comes into play.



31 Kg2 Kd7

'In the event of passive defence – 31 ... Kb7 White must win by breaking through with his king via the kingside: 32 Kf3 Re8 33 Kf4 h6 34 h4 etc.' (Karpov). For example: 34 ... Kc8 35 R2a5 Kb7 36 h5 gxh5 37 Kf5 Re6 38 f4 Rg6 39 Ra3 Kc8 40 Rd3 Kd7 41 Re3 and wins.

If 31 ... Re8, then 32 d7+ Kxd7 33 Rf6 (Karpov) is possible, and although Black can complicate his opponent's task somewhat by 33 ... a5! 34 bxa5 Re5 35 Bb4 Ke8, all the same White is close to victory: 36 Rb6 Ba7 37 Rb7 etc. However, the importance of the black rook's activation should not be overrated: 32 Kf3!? Re6 33 R2a5 Kb7 34 Kf4 h6 35 h4 – as in the variation with 31 ... Kb7 the white king breaks through into the enemy position (35 ... Re1 36 h5 etc.).

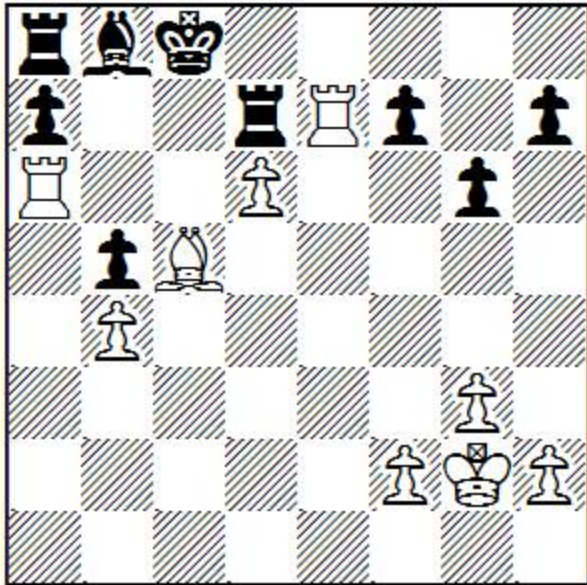
32 Re2!

There was also a win by 32 R2a5 Ke6 33 Rxb5 Rd7! 34 Rba5! (Karpov considers only 34 Ra2 Bxd6, when 'the position is not so clear') 34 ... Bxd6 35 Bxa7, but with the move in the game White does not allow the opponent to disentangle himself normally.

32 ... Kc8

In the event of 32 ... Re8 33 Rxe8 Kxe8 34 Kf3 (Karpov) 34 ... Kd7 35 Ke4 Ke6 36 g4 the black army makes a pitiful spectacle.

33 Re7 Rd7



34 Ra2!

The decisive rook manoeuvre, whereas the incautious 34 Rc6+? Kb7 35 Rxd7+ Kxc6 36 Rxf7! (36 Rd8 a5 Karpov) 36 ... a5! would have allowed Black good saving chances: 37 Rxh7 Bxd6 38 Bxd6 Kxd6 39 bxa5 Rxa5 40 Rg7 b4 41 Rxg6+ Kc5.

34 ... a5 (34 ... Kd8 35 Bb6+; 34 ... Bxd6 35 Rxd7 Kxd7 36 Rd2) 35 Rc2 1-0

The ease with which Karpov defeated the best grandmasters in the world, in what appeared to be completely harmless positions, still creates a great impression.

A win at the finish over Larsen put everything in its place: 1. Karpov – 10 out of 14 (+7-1=6); 2. Timman – 9; 3. Sosonko – 8; 4. Hort – 7½; 5-6. Dolmatov and Ribli – 7, etc.

A considerable stir was also caused by the champion's second successive victory at the autumn super-tournament in Tilburg. Initially in the 2nd round he defeated Ribli with Black – revenge again! In the 3rd round he unexpected lost with White to Larsen (*Volume 4, Game No.48*), but then 'in his anger' he inflicted defeats on Timman, Hübner, Andersson and Spassky! Against the ex-world champion Karpov again extracted the evergreen Keres Attack from his armoury.

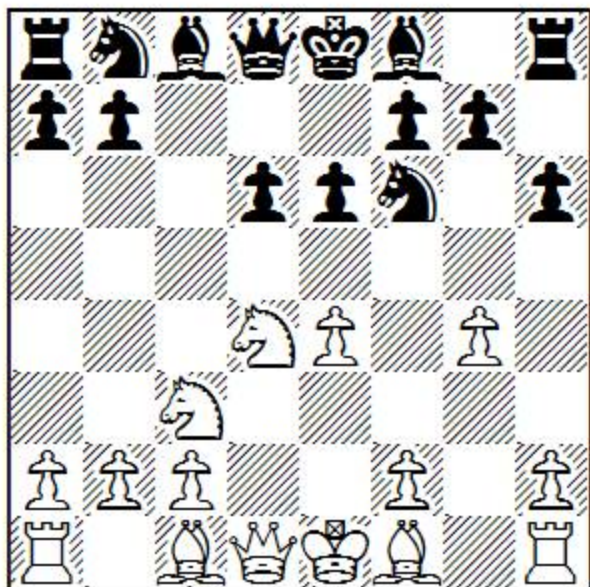
Game 83

A.Karpov-B.Spassky

Tilburg 1980, 9th round

Sicilian Defence B81

1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 e6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Nf6 5 Nc3 d6 6 g4 h6 (6 ... Nc6 – *Game No.50*;
6 ... Be7 – *Game No.71*)



7 h4

Later Karpov turned to 7 Rg1 (*Game No.89*), whereas he abandoned 7 g5 hxg5 8 Bxg5 after two games with Andersson (Skara 1980; Bugojno 1980), where Black equalised with 8 ... Nc6 9 Qd2 Qb6 10 Nb3 a6 11 0-0-0 Qc7 followed by ... Bd7, ... Be7, ... 0-0-0, ... Kb8, ... Bc8 and ... Ng8!?

7 ... Nc6 8 Rg1 d5!?

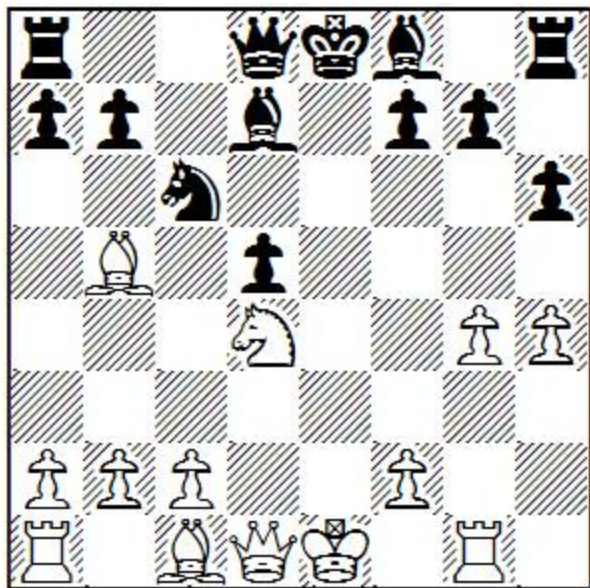
‘The most critical continuation, if Black is aiming for an active battle in the centre. Otherwise, by advancing his g-pawn on the next move, White would have driven back the knight from f6.’ (Karpov)

Another thrust is more often employed – 8 ... h5. In the 1st game of our 1984/85 match Karpov played 9 gxh5, and after 9 ... Nxh5 10 Bg5 Nf6 11 Qd2 Qb6 12 Nb3 Bd7 13 0-0-0 a6 (a set-up similar to that employed by Andersson – cf. above) I successfully solved my opening problems (more details about this in Volume 7).

9 g5 Ng4 10 Be2 runs into the counter 10 ... d5!, which was devised by the Hungarian grandmaster Andras Adorjan, who was famed for his interesting style of play and even more for his original discoveries in many openings. I analysed this idea with him before my first match with Karpov, and its viability was confirmed by one of Andras's games: 11 Nxc6 bxc6 12 Bxg4 hxg4 13 Qxg4 d4 14 Ne2 e5! (Sznapi-Adorjan, Dortmund 1984).

9 Bb5 Bd7 10 exd5 Nxd5 (if 10 ... exd5, then 11 Qe2+ Be7 12 Be3 a6 13 Bd3 is quite good for White) 11 Nxd5 exd5

Simplification such as 11 ... Nxd4 12 Bxd7+ Qxd7 13 Qxd4 Qxd5 14 Qxd5 exd5 leads after 15 Be3 to a tedious position where it is hard for Black to display any activity. He can probably defend, but why play such an opening set-up?



12 Be3!

'Development first and foremost! There was another tempting possibility – 12 Qe2+, which after 12 ... Qe7 13 Be3 Nxd4 14 Bxd7+ Kxd7 15 Bxd4 would have led to some advantage for White, but after 12 ... Be7 13 Nf5 Bxf5 14 gxf5 Kf8 the position does not seem so clear to me.' (Karpov)

12 ... Be7

It looks risky to play 12 ... Qxh4 13 Qd2! (in my opinion, the best move, not allowing simplification) 13 ... Be7 14 0-0-0. But after the

preparatory 12 ... a6! 13 Ba4 the pawn may prove perfectly edible: 13 ... Qxh4 14 Qf3 Qe7 15 0-0-0 Qe4 16 Qg3 0-0-0 17 Nxc6 Bd6! 18 Qxd6 Bxc6 19 Qg3 Qxa4.

13 Qd2

'13 Qe2 was also possible, trying to exploit the open position of the black king. True, then too White is subjected to danger along the undefended a5-e1 diagonal, and also in some cases along the e-file. Black would have had a choice between 13 ... Qa5+ 14 c3 Nxd4 15 Bxd7+ Kxd7 16 Bxd4 Rhe8 and 13 ... 0-0 14 0-0-0 Qa5, which after 15 Bxc6 bxc6 16 Kb1 looks more promising for White.' (Karpov)

However, in my view, after 16 ... Bxh4 White has to work rather hard to demonstrate that he has compensation for the pawn (say, 17 f4 Rfe8 etc.). Instead of 15 Bxc6 he can play 15 Kb1 immediately, but after 15 ... Nxd4 16 Bxd4 Qxb5 17 Qxe7 Rfe8 18 Qa3 Rac8 Black has a sound position (19 g5?! h5, and the c2-point becomes the target for a counterattack).

And after 13 Qf3 0-0 14 Bxc6 bxc6 15 g5 Black seizes the initiative with the pawn sacrifice 15 ... h5! 16 Qxh5 Qa5+ 17 c3 Rab8.

13 ... Bxh4?!

'Formerly, as I recall, the ex-world champion would not even have looked at such a pawn, but times change, and a liking for extra pawns can arise even with players such as Spassky. However, Black's desire to get rid one of the pawns impending over his position is determined by a desire to remove his king to the flank, which if done immediately is dangerous: 13 ... 0-0 14 Nf5 Bf6 15 0-0-0, and it is hard for Black to parry the threats.' (Karpov). And indeed, 15 ... d4? already loses to 16 Bxh6 gxh6 17 Qxh6.

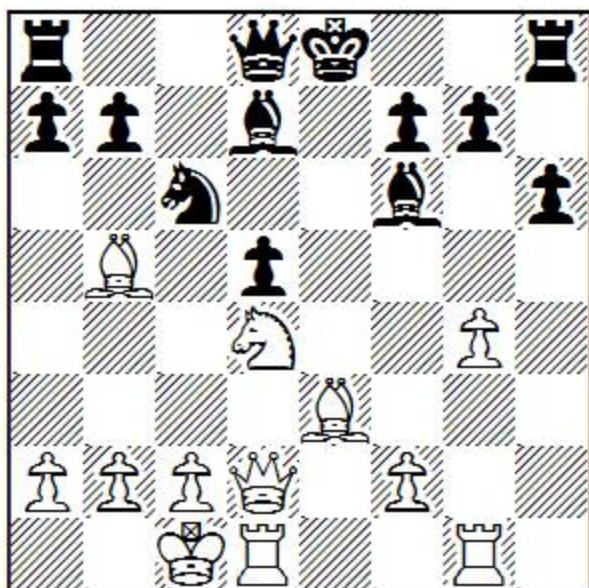
However, one of the main experts on Scheveningen set-ups, Ulf Andersson (who in recent years has played more in correspondence tournaments) found the clever defence 14 ... d4!, after which in the complications 15 Bxh6 Bb4 16 c3 dxc3 17 bxc3 Ne5! 18 Be2 Re8 19 Kf1 Bf8 20 Bf4 Qa5 Black gained excellent compensation for the sacrificed pawn (Timmerman-Andersson, correspondence 1995-97).

The move in the game completely hands the initiative to White.

14 0-0-0 Bf6?!

After the relieving 14 ... Nxd4 15 Bxd7+ Qxd7 16 Bxd4 0-0 Black runs the danger of coming under a crushing attack: 17 Rh1! Qd8 18 Rdg1! Bf6 19 g5 Bxd4 20 Qxd4 (20 gxh6? Qb6! 21 c3 Bxf2) 20 ... hxg5 21 Qd3 f5 22 Rh5 Qd7 23 Rhxg5 Rf7 24 Qh3 and wins.

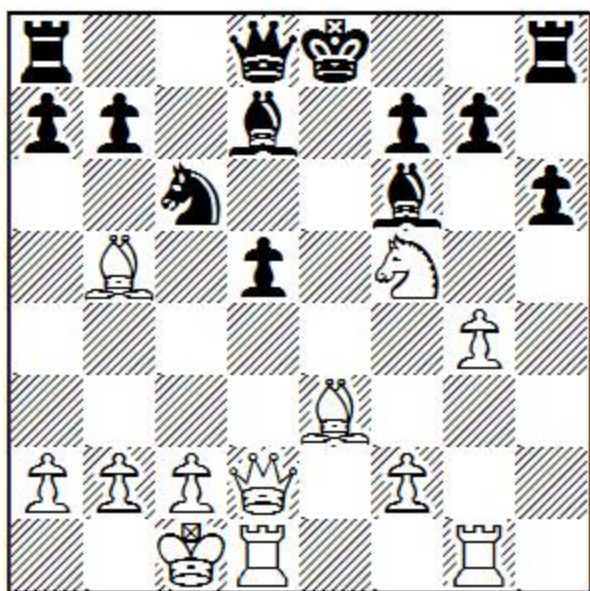
It seems to me that the best decision (as on the previous move) was to castle. Of course, after 14 ... 0-0 the reply 15 g5 looks threatening. Now 15 ... Nxd4 is met by the strong 16 Qxd4!, when Black loses after both 16 ... Bxb5? 17 gxh6 Bf6 18 Rxd7+ Kh8 19 Qf4 Bd7 20 Bd4, and 16 ... Bxg5? 17 Bxd7 Qxd7 18 f4. And in the event of 16 ... hxg5 17 Bxd7 Qxd7 18 Bxg5 Bxg5 19 Rxd7 f6 20 Rh5 White's attack is very strong. 15 ... hxg5 is more cautious, and if 16 Bxg5 Bxg5 17 Rxd7, then not 17 ... Nxd4? because of 18 Rxd7+! Kxd7 19 Qxd4+ f6 20 Rg1+ Kf7 21 Qxd5+ Be6 22 Qxb7+ Qe7 23 Rg7+, but 17 ... Qf6 – in this position there is still all to play for. 15 Nf5 may prove more unpleasant, when after 15 ... d4 16 Bxc6 dxe3 17 Qxe3 bxc6 18 Nxe4 Qxe4 19 Rxd7 Black faces a laborious defence.



15 Nf5!?

It is not at all easy for White to develop his initiative – Black has no weaknesses on the kingside, and in addition his king is not yet there! On the one hand, the knight move is good, in that White opens the g-file, practically ruling out kingside castling by Black (on the queenside too the king will not be secure); in addition White is ready to capture the d5-pawn. On the other hand, one of the main attacking pieces is exchanged, and the price for opening the g-file is the loss of a possible pawn storm.

Karpov rejected the obvious 15 f4, after failing to find a clear advantage after 15 ... Qa5 16 Qxa5 Nxa5 17 Bxd7+ Kxd7, and only after the game did he discover that 'by 18 Nf5! White would have gained excellent chances.' Computer verification has shown that Karpov was right: 18 ... Kc6 19 Bd4 Bxd4 20 Rxd4 with advantage to White. 15 ... Qc7 is no better on account of 16 g5 hxg5 17 fxg5 Be5 18 Nf3 0-0-0 19 Bxc6 Bxc6 20 Nxe5 Qxe5 21 Bxa7. To avoid the worst, Black should again go into an endgame – 21 ... Rh2 22 Bd4 Rxd2 23 Bxe5 Rxd1+ 24 Rxd1, but here too he faces an extremely unpleasant defence.

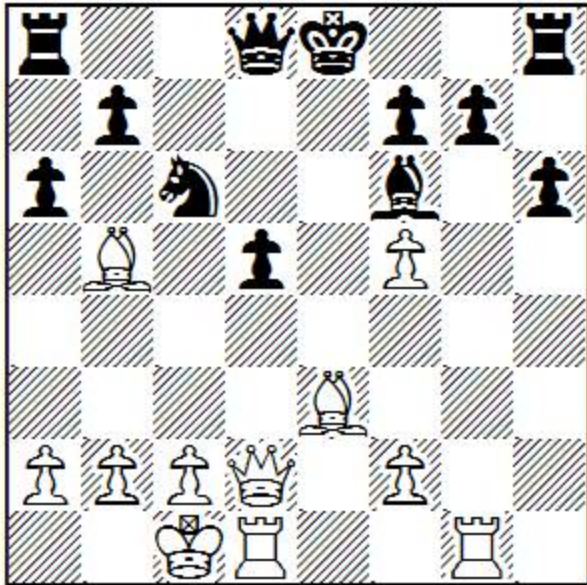


15 ... Bxf5

It is no longer possible to castle: 15 ... 0-0? 16 Nxh6+! gxh6 17 g5! Be5 18 f4 Bc7 19 gxh6+ Kh8 20 Qxd5 Qe7 (20 ... Be6 21 Qg2!) 21 Bc5 Bxf4+ 22 Kb1 Qe5 23 Bxf8 and wins.

16 gxf5 a6

Spassky intends to preserve his d-pawn as compensation for the difficulties experienced. Going into an ending – 16 ... Qd7!? 17 Qxd5 Qxd5 18 Rxd5 a6 gave him a chance of equalising after 19 Bxc6+ bxc6 20 Rd6 Rc8, thanks to his passed h-pawn (21 Re1 Kf8 22 Rd7 h5 23 Ra7 h4 24 Rxa6 h3). But by 19 Ba4! b5 20 Bb3 Ne7 21 Rd3 Nxf5 22 Bc5 Rc8 23 Re1+ Ne7 24 Bd6 Karpov could have retained the two bishops, the initiative, and real chances of success.



17 Bxc6+?

A strange exchange: Black's pawn bastion in the centre is supported, and he acquires the real possibility of hiding his king at c7 or c8 and of using the b-file for a counterattack.

'It is always regrettable to give up such a bishop, but White has no time to retreat it, since then the d-pawn would advance, and Black would calmly remove his king to f8, and if necessary to g8.' (Karpov). Here he is insufficiently concrete. With this development of events the rook at h8 remains out of play for a long time and both white bishops become very active: 17 Ba4! b5 (here 17 ... Qd7 is weaker than on the previous move, since apart from 18 Qxd5 White has the very unpleasant 18 Bb6! Qxf5? 19 Qb4) 18 Bb3 d4 19 Qe2. Now, after both 19 ... Kf8 20 Qh5 Qe7 21 Bf4 Rd8 22 Rge1 and 19 ... Qe7 20 Qf3 Rc8 21 Bf4 Ne5 22 Qg3 White has a powerful initiative.

17 ... bxc6 18 Bc5

In the event of 18 Bd4 the fact that the d5-pawn is defended allows Black to set up a defence with the active participation of his king: 18 ... Bxd4 19 Qxd4 Qf6 20 Qc5 (20 Qb4 Kd7! 21 Qb7+ Kd6!) 20 ... Kd7! 21 c4 Rhb8! 22 Rd2 Qe7 23 Qd4 Qf6 24 Rxc7 Qxd4 25 Rxd4 Ke7 26 cxd5 cxd5 27 Rxd5 Rb5 with an imminent draw.

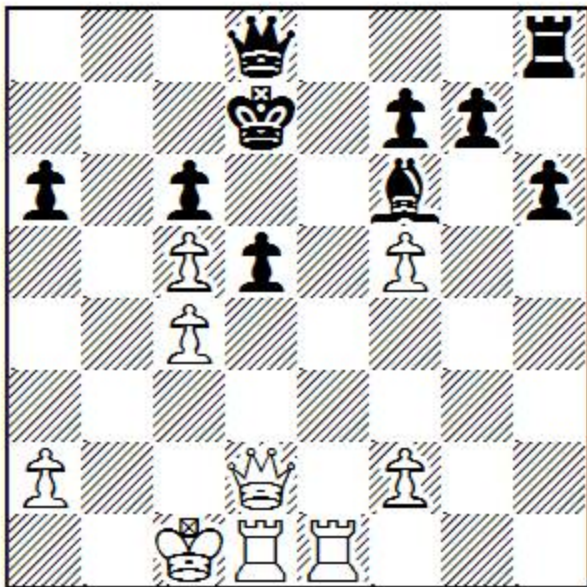
18 ... Rb8 19 b4!?

Sharp and interesting play; to support his fading initiative, White decides to give up his main trump – the secure shelter of his king. After the quiet 19 b3 Rb5 20 Bd4 Black defends by simple means: 20 ... Bxd4 21 Qxd4 Qf6 22 Rge1+ Kf8 23 Re5 Rb8 (in the event of 23 ... Kg8 24 Re8+ Kh7 25 Qxf6 gxf6 26 Re7 Rf8 27 Rc7 the rook endgame is nevertheless advantageous to White) 24 Rg1 (24 Rde1 Kg8) 24 ... h5!? and the position is not clear (only, if 25 Rge1, instead of 25 ... h4?? 26 Qb4+, he should move his king – 25 ... Kg8).

19 ... Rb5?

When Karpov advanced his b-pawn, he thought that the opponent was obliged to sacrifice the exchange. But this is not so – the worst was already over for Black, and 19 ... Kd7! would have emphasised this. Both kings are poorly sheltered, and White also has to be cautious, for example: 20 Qe2? a5 21 c4 axb4! 22 cxd5 Qa5! 23 dxc6+ Kc8 24 Kb1 b3 25 a3 Rb5, and Black goes onto the attack. 20 c4 Kc7 21 cxd5 cxd5 22 Qd3! is stronger – White still holds the initiative, but the outcome is hard to predict in this double-edged position.

20 Rge1+ Kd7 21 c4 Rxc5 22 bxc5



22 ... Bg5?

This fatal mistake was the result of Black overestimating his own chances. The outwardly risky move 19 b4 must have excited Spassky, and he decided to punish his presumptuous opponent. Karpov also

rated his own position very optimistically and considered 22 ... Qb8 to be the most appropriate reply, when he was intending 23 cxd5! (23 f4?! Kc8! 24 cxd5 cxd5 25 Re2 Rd8 with chances for both sides) 23 ... Bg5 24 Re3, 'when Black has to seek salvation in the variation 24 ... Bxe3 25 fxe3 Qe5 26 dxc6+ Kxc6 27 Qd7+ Kxc5 28 Qa7+ Kb5.' But here there is no salvation: 29 Qb7+ Kc5 30 Rd2! Qa1+ 31 Kc2 Qxa2+ 32 Kd1 Qa4+ 33 Rc2+ Kd6 34 Qc7+ Kd5 35 Qc5+ Ke4 36 Ke2! Qb5+ 37 Rc4+. The consequences of 25 ... Rd8 26 dxc6+ Ke7 are not so catastrophic, but things are very difficult for Black in the queen endgame: 27 Qc2 Rxd1+ 28 Qxd1 Qc7 29 Qd5 h5 30 Kd2.

Even so, Black had a possibility of seriously hindering his opponent's task – 22 ... Qf8! After the forced 23 Qb4 he can take play into an endgame: 23 ... Qb8 24 Qxb8 Rxb8 25 cxd5 Rb5 (or 25 ... a5 26 Re4 cxd5 27 Rxd5+ Kc6 28 Rd3 Kxc5 29 Ra4!) 26 dxc6+ Kxc6 27 Rd6+ Kc7 28 Rxa6 Rxc5+ 29 Kd1 Rxf5 30 Ke2, and it is still not easy for White to win.

23 f4 Qf6!

It was on this unexpected riposte that Spassky was pinning his hopes. Now it is not possible to block the diagonal by natural means: 24 Re5? Qxe5! 25 fxe5 Bxd2+ 26 Rxd2 Re8, and it is not easy even for White to save himself. But ...

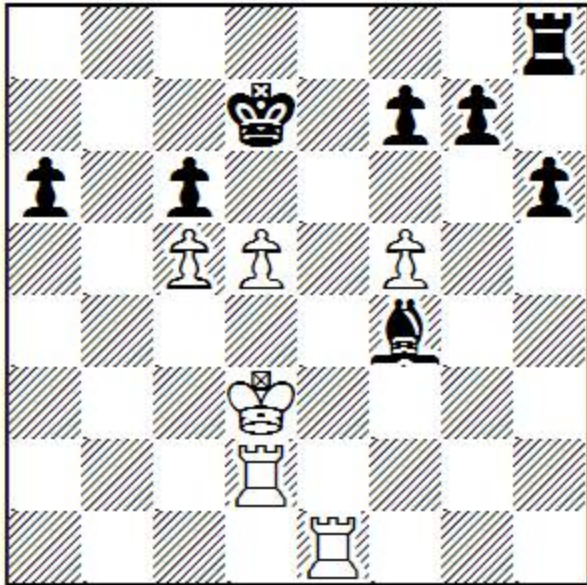
24 cxd5!

Apparently Spassky underestimated this capture, and had been counting beforehand on 24 fxg5? Qa1+ 25 Kc2 Qxa2+ with a winning attack: 26 Kd3 Qxc4+ 27 Ke3 hxg5!, or 26 Kc1 Qa1+ 27 Kc2 Qa4+ 28 Kc1 Rb8! He noticed his oversight when it was too late, although the logic of the struggle should have suggested to him that any winning variations here for Black were accidental, and he should have carefully checked them before basing his decisions on them.

24 ... Qa1+ 25 Kc2 Qxa2+ 26 Kd3 Qxd2+

26 ... Qb3+ 27 Qc3 Qb5+ 28 Qc4 Bh4 was more tenacious, but after 29 Rg1 Bf6 30 d6 the win for White is merely a question of time.

27 Rxd2 Bxf4



28 Ra2!

This concludes the game. The threat of d5-d6 does not allow Black to defend his a6-pawn, after which both White's rooks and his king become terribly active.

28 ... cxd5 29 Rxa6 h5 30 Kd4 h4 31 Kxd5 Rb8 32 f6 gxf6 33 Rxf6 Bg3 34 Rxf7+ Kd8 35 Rf8+ 1-0

The effect of this game was such that for a time $8 \dots d5$ went out of use, and in similar situations the advance $\dots d6-d5$ began to be regarded with great suspicion.

A draw at the finish with Tal secured the champion a new success: 1. Karpov – $7\frac{1}{2}$ out of 11 (+5–1=5); 2. Portisch – 7; 3. Timman – $6\frac{1}{2}$; 4-5. Sosonko and Spassky – 6; 6. Tal – $5\frac{1}{2}$, etc.

On the background of these almost continuous successes the only slight cloud was a share of 4th-5th places at a tournament in Buenos Aires and a loss with White against Timman in a sharp variation of the Sicilian Defence. Here Larsen and Timman finally achieved their cherished dream – they finished ahead of the world champion, by taking the first two places.

Immediately after this Karpov headed the USSR team at the Olympiad (Malta, November-December 1980) and scored +6=6. I was the second reserve in that event and it was only with enormous difficulty, on the tie-break, that we finished ahead of the strong

Hungarian team. The gold medals were secured by the last-round Karpov-Jacobsen game, which was adjourned in a difficult rook endgame and accurately won by our leader on the resumption.

In 1981, shortly before the next match for the world championship, when it had already transpired that his opponent would again be Korchnoi, the champion initially played in a match-tournament of four Soviet teams (here, for the first time, I battled with him one-to-one: the outcome was two fighting draws), and then in three strong tournaments – Linares (1-2. Christiansen and Karpov – 8 out of 11; 3. Larsen – 7), Moscow (1. Karpov – 9 out of 13; 2-4. Kasparov, Polugayevsky and Smyslov – 7½) and Amsterdam (1. Timman – 7½ out of 11; 2-3. Karpov and Portisch – 7).

To judge by the number of wins, and above all by their quality and diversity of style, the 30-year-old Karpov was in optimal form and looked the favourite in the forthcoming battle for the crown.

‘There are no easy Matches’

The match in Merano (autumn 1981), in contrast to Baguio, is remembered by Karpov ‘with tenderness and pleasure: the countryside, the people, the unsurpassed organisation of the event; and also the victory itself was beautiful, unequivocal, rapid ... ’ But at the time, immediately after his win, he stated: ‘The match, although it turned out to be short, demanded both intensity and serious nervous stress. There were practically no short draws: in every game, apart from the 17th, the battle went on to the “bare” kings. Therefore the match has to be called difficult – but strictly speaking, there are no easy matches for the world championship.’

The world champion’s preparations were on an unprecedented comprehensive and fundamental scale. Igor Zaitsev relates:

‘During the three years separating Baguio from Merano the number of those wishing to help us in our work increased. And here it was not at all the matter of a pro-Karpov and anti-Korchnoi mood – the participation itself in analytical preparations for top-level events was considered highly prestigious (*but often also obligatory* – G.K.). And I, in my capacity as the world champion’s senior trainer, did everything to expand the circle of voluntary helpers. I thought that even a brief chess association with new people would enrich Karpov’s style, and make it more universal and flexible.

‘This also ensured a continuity of views, which is extremely important for any great chess player: in the course of his formation he has to pass through his perception all the development stages of the centuries-old chess thinking. The arrangement of such knowledge continuity is essentially the basis of all training work. This is the guarantee of a professional’s many years of tournament stability, whereas gaps in his knowledge give rise to crises and failures.

‘Immediately before Merano the core of our training group remained the same. Balashov and I were again appointed as seconds, but an active part in the general analytical preparation was played by Tal, Polugayevsky (they also travelled to Merano), Geller and Vaganian. At various times we were joined by Ubilava, Mikhalchishin, Tseshkovsky, Kapengut, Kimelfeld, Lepyoshkin and Rozenberg, and one of the sessions was visited by Georgy Borisenko, a creative associate of Furman and an elder statesman of Soviet theoreticians, whom we all, from Karpov downwards, regarded with particular respect.

‘Anticipating serious opposition in the opening, we endeavoured to learn the lessons of Baguio and on this occasion we stored up a great number of important and minor theoretical surprises (although, as it later transpired, not all the ideas were brought up to the necessary condition). Evidently relying on this, in the last year before the match Anatoly involved himself more in public affairs, and since the training brigade consisted mainly of active players, who regularly went off to various events, sometimes I had to spend the training sessions virtually in proud isolation.

‘On one such inopportune January day in 1981 the higher authorities, in the persons of the Sports Committee chairman Pavlov and the Central Committee secretary for sport Gramov, suddenly turned up out of the blue. On seeing such a strange desolation, they began benevolently, but very insistently and naggingly, questioning me about the course of the preparations. But when I fetched out our chess notes, which for the uninitiated were double-dutch, the impressive appearance of the thick notebooks, crammed with numerous variations, greatly calmed them down.

‘Rumours to the effect that in the period of the matches with Korchnoi we were all held under some kind of special constraint, do not accord with reality: there were no strong measures or dressings-down at all.

‘The main training session before our departure took place in Plavinas in Latvia on the banks of a picturesque forest lake. Here we were able both to work fruitfully and to relax well, and build up our physical strength.

‘Autumn in Italy greeted us with mild sunny weather and persistent attacks by temperamental journalists. Our delegation was accommodated in a comfortable three-story villa where, much to everyone’s joy, there was even a swimming pool. True, when the building warmed up, repulsive black crabs – scorpions! – began to crawl out of all the crevices. This was a real shock. To carry out a serious analysis under such conditions was uncomfortable, to say the least. What misfortune – in Baguio we had been pursued by earthquakes and typhoons, and here we came across these creatures! Fortunately, it was explained to us that they are poisonous only in May. And little by little we calmed down, although the scorpions remained with us right to the end of the match ...

‘As is usual in such matches, intensive analysis took place at night – especially if by morning it was necessary to urgently crack some opening problem or find the optimal solution in an adjourned position. In contrast to Baguio, there were only four of the latter – in the 2nd, 4th, 5th and 8th games.

‘Nowadays we have all become accustomed to a game concluding in one sitting. However, in those years the matches were still played with an adjournment after forty moves. This had its pluses: it was in the course of work on unfinished games that the art of analysis was perfected. But what a hellish strain, usually at night, was placed on the shoulders of the trainers! ... When studying the specific features of games with adjournments, even before Merano I established that the adjournment, like the right of the first move, is a small but undoubted advantage for White: he can be the first to exploit – or, according to circumstances, not exploit – his right to seal a move! I informed Karpov of this observation, hoping that it would come in useful to him. Later, precisely because of this additional trump for White, I took the abolishment of adjournments to be a logical and just act.

‘It is easy to work out that in an unlimited match it is always advantageous to have the white pieces in the first game. Therefore, when sending Karpov off to the drawing of lots, our parting words were like those of fastidious mushroom-gatherers: “Pick only the white!” But it turned out the other way round ...’

The white pieces in the first game went to Korchnoi, but this did not help him. Karpov very confidently handled the Tartakower-Makogonov-Bondarevsky Variation of the Queen's Gambit: he was not afraid to go in for a position with hanging pawns at c5 and d5, he made a timely exchange of the enemy dark-squared bishop (by ... Nf6-h5xg3), and after a mistake by White on the 24th move he carried out the typical ... d5-d4 breakthrough with great effect and scored an excellent win. Geller: 'After this the champion gained a serious psychological advantage.'

In the 2nd game Korchnoi tried to surprise his opponent with a rare defence in the Ruy Lopez, but this resulted in a somewhat inferior position without any real counterplay – Karpov's forte! 'He completely outplayed his opponent positionally. It became clear that the challenger's defence – never his strong weapon – was on the point of collapse, and that he was unable to withstand the champion's systematic, although outwardly unhurried offensive. One must mention the exceptional coordination that the white pieces achieved in this game,' writes Geller, who seven years earlier, if you remember, was not enraptured by Karpov's style.

After a draw in the 3rd game, Karpov also won in subtle positional style in the 4th game, where again, as in the 6th game of the Moscow match (1974), the Petroff Defence occurred. But in Moscow things ended in a swift rout, whereas after the 22nd move in Merano the champion 'would not have objected to sharing the point, had not Korchnoi introduced the procedure of offering a draw via the arbiter'. But at that moment the challenger chose a dubious plan, and his position began to deteriorate move by move ...

Just four games – and already three of the six required wins! Balashov: 'Hardly anyone could guess Karpov's moves – this is an indication of his good form.' Tal: 'Karpov ran half of the distance with lightning speed!'

At that point Viktor Lvovich began complaining of feeling unwell – he was convinced that there was some reason for this and that, he reckoned, the Soviets were irradiating him with something. But this is what Alexander Roshal, who was then the Soviet delegation's press attaché, has to say regarding this today:

'I know nothing about any influence on Korchnoi. In Merano there was with us an important psychologist, Kabanov. He spent a long time questioning me about how Zukhar had behaved in Baguio. When I told

him of how our doctor had acquired a high opinion of himself, Kabanov smiled: "Well, that won't happen with me." But within a week he asked me to collect cuttings of articles in the foreign press, where his name was mentioned. I don't know, perhaps he needed this for his report ...

'As in Baguio, there were indeed many accompanying us – however, not to frighten the opponent, but for requirements of a largely technical nature: security, protection against "bugging", and so on. In Merano everything was much simpler than in the Philippines. Korchnoi was already a spent force, and it was clear to everyone that Karpov would win the match. It was another matter when, after a series of wins, Karpov lost the 6th game, and subsequently also the 13th, and in the Sports Committee they became slightly alarmed (suppose Baguio were to repeat itself?) and began fussing about – they activated the Moscow "support group" and appealed to grandmasters for assistance ...

'Emmanuel Sztein, the press attaché of the challenger's delegation, later recalled in an interview that I had supposedly said to him when we met: "We're going to annihilate you!" I don't remember the exact words, but I could indeed have promised him that we would make mincemeat of them. In this there was not simply confidence, but absolute conviction about our victory. I remember that I said to him: "Today the difference in playing strength between Korchnoi and Karpov is the same as between you and me!" (incidentally, despite the "warring camps", my relations with Sztein remained perfectly correct).

'But Korchnoi often sought the cause of his defeats outside of himself, and justified them by the interference of certain outside forces or simply chance, the good fortune of his opponent ... Vishy Anand once said to me: 'I have won about fifteen games against him, without any losses, and after each one of them he informed me that I have no idea about chess.' Such a habit also occurred with other great players, but with Korchnoi, in my view, it has gone to extremes.

'Therefore, in talking about "secret radiation", Viktor Lvovich is flattering himself: there was nothing of the sort. And whereas I remember Baguio as being one of the most gripping and dramatic of events, Merano is more associated with the sunny ocean, the visit to Venice, and so on. Here we were able to permit ourselves a completely different way of life, not so secluded and monotonous.'

After his disastrous start Korchnoi nevertheless managed to come to his senses – he made several draws and even gained quite a good

win (*Game No.35*), but in the 9th game he was struck another powerful blow.

Zaitsev: 'Korchnoi's three painful defeats at the start were nothing to do with the opening: Karpov outplayed his opponent in the later stages of the game. But the next three wins were associated to a considerable degree with home preparation. First of all, there was a purely Karpov-like idea in the 9th game, which many remember for the manoeuvre 11 ... Nh5! Here the world champion's distinctive style is clearly seen.'

Game 84

V.Korchnoi-A.Karpov

World Championship Match, Merano 1981, 9th game

Queen's Gambit D53

1 c4 e6 2 Nc3 d5 3 d4 Be7 4 Nf3 Nf6 5 Bg5 h6 6 Bh4 0-0 7 Rc1 dxc4!

One of the most valuable novelties in the match. Later experience showed that, in return for the temporary conceding of the centre, Black gains the opportunity to develop his queenside pieces comfortably.

8 e3

Black also equalises after 8 e4 Nc6! (the essential point of the plan with 7 ... dxc4) 9 e5 (9 Bxc4? Nxe4 10 Bxe7 Nxc3 11 Bxd8 Nxd1 12 Bxc7 Nxb2 favours Black) 9 ... Nd5 10 Bxe7 Ncxe7 11 Bxc4 Nxc3 12 bxc3 b6 (Tukmakov-Beliavsky, Tilburg 1984).

8 ... c5 9 Bxc4 cxd4 10 exd4

If 10 Nxd4, then 10 ... Bd7! leads to an equal game, for example:

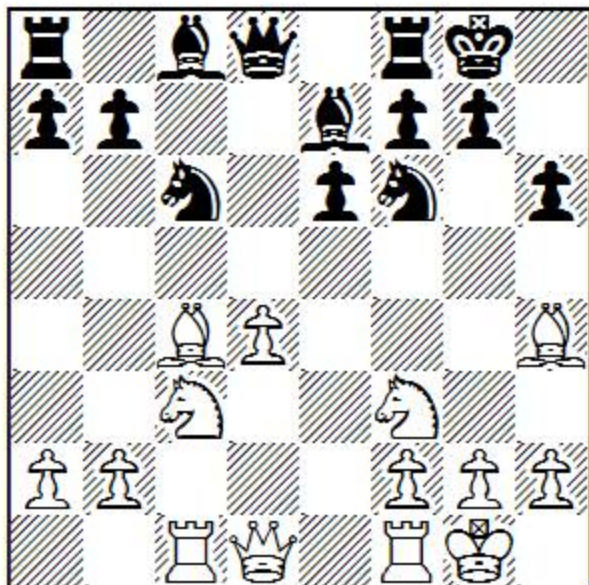
1) 11 Be2 Nc6 12 Nb3 Nd5 13 Bxe7 Ncxe7 14 Nxd5 Nxd5 15 Qd4 Bc6 16 Bf3 Ne7 (Korchnoi-Karpov, 17th matchgame, Merano 1981);

2) 11 0-0 Nc6 12 Nb3 Rc8 13 Be2 Nd5 14 Bxe7 Ncxe7 15 Nxd5 Nxd5 16 Rxc8 Qxc8 17 Qd4 Qb8 18 Bf3 Nf6 19 Nc5 Bb5 20 Rd1 b6 (Karpov-Kasparov, 23rd matchgame, Moscow 1984/85);

3) 11 Bg3 a6 12 e4 Nc6 13 Nb3 b5 14 Bd3 b4 15 Na4 Ne5 16 Bxe5 Bxa4 (Ivanchuk-Gelfand, Dortmund 1997).

10 ... Nc6 11 0-0

It is curious that the same position, only with the rook on e1, was reached – moreover, from another opening! – in the 11th game of the second Karpov-Kasparov match (1985), and that extra tempo, which enabled the rook to stand on e1, played a decisive role (cf. Volume 7).



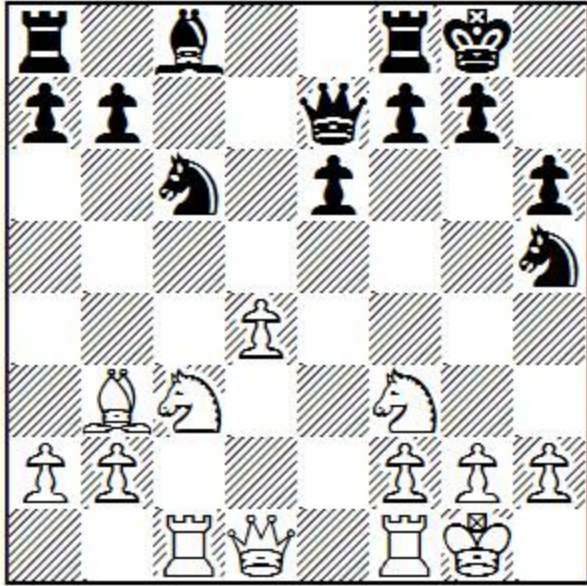
11 ... Nh5!

An important detail of Black's opening construction. After the exchange of the dark-squared bishops, his knights completely control the d5-square.

12 Bxe7 Nxe7 13 Bb3?!

On encountering a strong novelty, White should have curtailed the game and at home sought a more effective reaction to 7 ... dxc4, or even taken a critical look at the virtues of 7 Rc1. 'I gained the impression,' writes Karpov, 'that here Korchnoi realised he had not extracted any advantage from the white pieces and had lost the opening battle, but that as though from inertia he was continuing to seek ways of playing for a win. It is for this reason that he avoids the simplification which would be inevitable after d4-d5.'

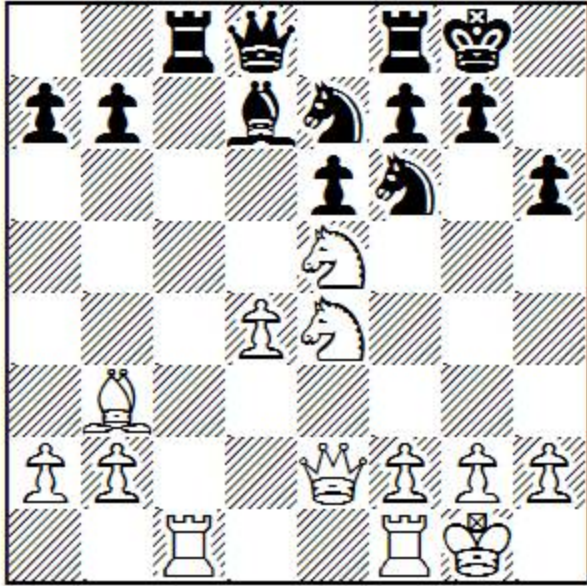
The opening of the centre 13 d5 exd5 14 Nxd5 Nxd5 15 Qxd5 (or 15 Bxd5 Nf4 16 Be4 Be6) 15 ... Qxd5 16 Bxd5 does not prevent Black from completing his development: 16 ... Nf4 17 Bc4 Be6 18 g3 Rac8 with a rapid draw (Uhlmann-Kurajica, Sarajevo 1982).



13 ... Nf6 14 Ne5 Bd7 15 Qe2 Rc8 16 Ne4?!

From this moment Korchnoi's position begins to deteriorate with every move. 'White is unable to find a clear-cut plan and he overlooks the fact that each exchange of minor pieces potentially weakens his d4-pawn.' (Karpov)

To this I should add that, when there are just heavy pieces on the board, an isolated pawn is always and only a weakness. But White's main problem is that it is very hard for him to find a 'clear-cut plan' – one that does not in the end lead to a similar exchange of minor pieces and to the even more obvious weakness of the d4-pawn. For example, 16 Rfe1 Rc7!? (Karpov; but not 16 ... Bc6? 17 Nxf7 Rxf7 18 Qxe6) 17 Rcd1 Bc6, and here 18 Nxf7 Rxf7 19 Bxe6 Ned5 is no longer advantageous to White, while after 18 Nb5 Bxb5 19 Qxb5 Ned5 it is far easier to guess Black's next few moves.



16 ... Nxe4 17 Qxe4

After 17 Rxc8 Qxc8 18 Qxe4 there is a well-known method of play: 18 ... Bc6! 19 Nxc6 Qxc6 20 Qxc6 bxc6! 21 Rd1 Rb8!, letting it be known that it is hard to get rid of the weak d4-pawn. 'Black's knight is capable both of securely defending his own pawn and of attacking the enemy d-pawn, whereas the functions of the white bishop are restricted.' (Karpov)

17 ... Bc6 18 Nxc6 Rxc6!

'This way, so that White should not be able, without making some concession (for example, conceding the c-file), to switch his rooks to the kingside.' (Karpov)

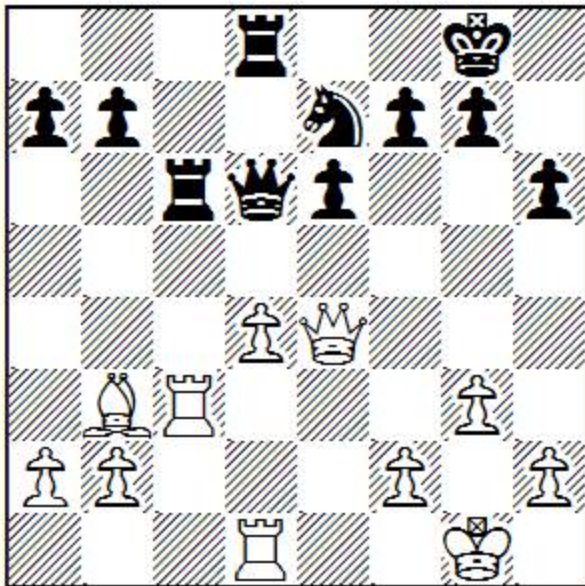
19 Rc3?!

An important moment. 'Korchnoi spent a long time considering the consequences of the exchange on c6, and in the end he evidently realised that he had underestimated the factors outlined above.' (Karpov). The absence of the dark-squared bishop, which could have defended the d4-pawn from e3, makes things difficult for White, and he now has to try and draw from a position of weakness: 19 Rxc6 bxc6! (an idea that is familiar to us from the 10th game of the Lasker-Capablanca match, *Volume 1, Game No.90*) 20 Rc1 Qb6 21 Rc4! Rd8 22 g3. I think that with accurate play this is a quite feasible task.

19 ... Qd6 20 g3?!

Karpov thinks that with this move White lost his 'prospects of play on the kingside'. If he had any, then it seems to be that they were lost much earlier. And, if he was thinking of how to save the game, it was better to regroup along the lines of 20 Rxc6 (20 Bc2 g6) 20 ... bxc6 21 Rc1 Rd8 22 Rc4 – after 22 ... Nf5 23 Rxc6 Qxd4 24 Qe2 Black's initiative is not yet threatening.

20 ... Rd8 (now the position has strategically clarified to Black's obvious advantage) 21 Rd1



21 ... Rb6!

Karpov avoids the exchange, in order to later intensify the pressure on the d4-pawn. And, to all appearances, the fate of this pawn is now decided (as Larsen aptly remarked: isolated pawns should not be blockaded, but won!). Korchnoi does not see where he could display any activity, and so he is forced to switch to passive defence.

22 Qe1 Qd7!

Consistently implementing the plan of intensifying the pressure on the d4-pawn.

23 Rcd3

The belated activation attempt 23 Rc5 is refuted tactically: 23 ... Rd6 24 Rdc1 Nc6! 25 Ba4 Nxd4! 26 Bxd7 Nf3+.

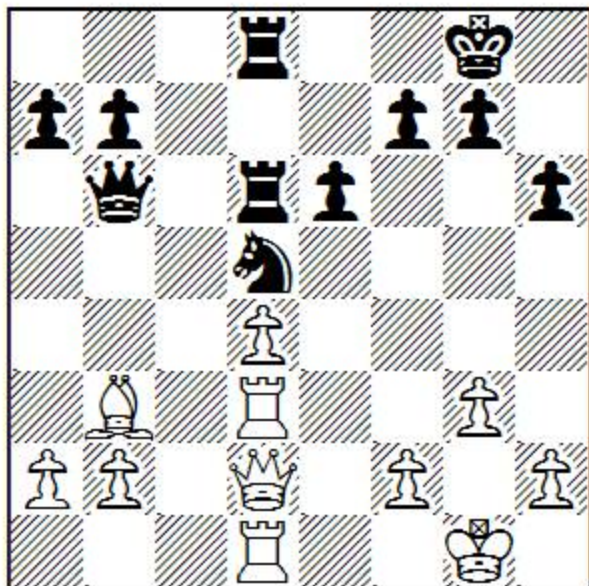
23 ... Rd6 24 Qe4 Qc6 25 Qf4

The exchange of queens leads to the loss of a pawn: 25 Qxc6 Nxc6 26 d5 Nb4, or 25 ... bxc6 26 Bc4 (26 g4 c5) 26 ... Nf5.

25 ... Nd5!

Now the queen cannot stand on an active square – 26 Qe4 Nb4! – and is forced to take up a less favourable position (it cannot move away from the queenside: 26 Qh4 a5 27 a4 b5!).

26 Qd2 Qb6!



27 Bxd5?!

Short of time, Korchnoi does not want to undermine the stability of his bishop by moving his a2-pawn, and he decides to parry the threat of ... Nd5-b4 in the simplest way. The position after 27 a3 Ne7 28 Qf4 Nc6 29 d5 e5 30 Qe3 Nd4 is also advantageous to Black, but possibly this was the lesser evil.

27 ... Rxd5 28 Rb3?!

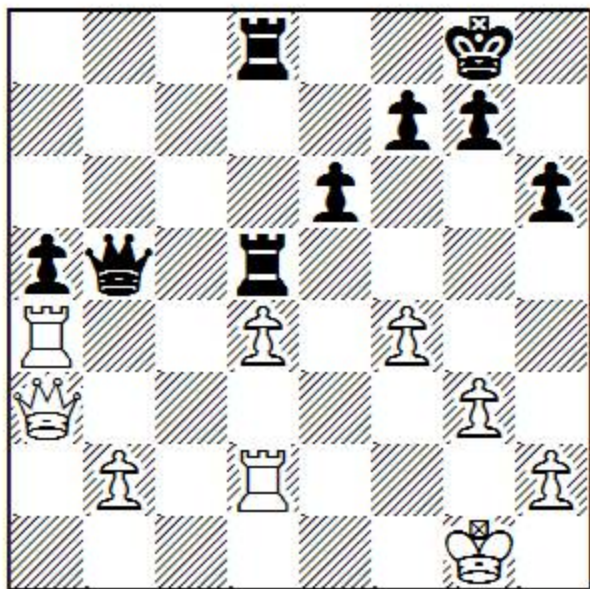
All the same a new weakening, to prevent ... e6-e5, cannot be avoided, and therefore the immediate 28 f4 was more tenacious, not moving the rook off the d-file: 28 ... R8d7 29 Qf2 Qd8 30 Qe3.

28 ... Qc6 29 Qc3 Qd7 30 f4 b6! 31 Rb4 b5! 32 a4 bxa4 33 Qa3 a5 34 Rxa4

White has won the battle for the a4-pawn, but at too high a price: his main forces are stuck on the queenside.

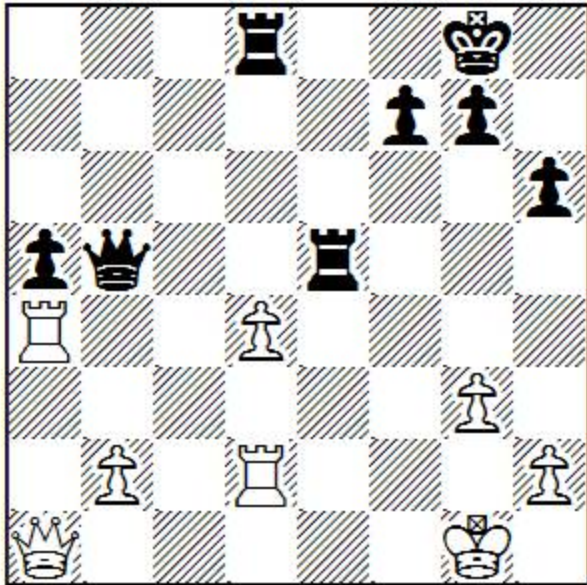
34 ... Qb5! (the invasion of the queen at e2 threatens in an instant to destroy White's position) **35 Rd2**

It was no better to play 35 b3 (with the idea of 35 ... Qe2 36 Qc1), agreeing to go into a bad rook endgame after 35 ... Rb8 36 Rd2 Qxb3 37 Qxb3 Rxb3 38 Rda2 Rbb5. But Korchnoi does not want to give up a pawn, and besides, as in the game 35 ... e5 36 fxe5 Rxe5 was also possible.



35 ... e5! 36 fxe5 Rxe5 37 Qa1

Of course, not 37 dxe5? Rxd2 38 Rxa5 Qe2. White only needs to make one move, and his queen, by standing at d1, will stabilise the position for a time ...



37 ... Qe8!

A splendid manoeuvre, exploiting to the maximum both the vertical and the diagonal possibilities of the strongest piece. White's position collapses like a house of cards.

38 dxe5 (38 Rd1 Re2 loses immediately) 38 ... Rxd2 39 Rxa5

There is no hope of setting up even a semblance of a defence after 39 Qe1 Qd8 40 Qe3 Qd5! 41 Re4 Rd3 42 Qf4 g5! 43 Qf5 (43 Qg4 Rd1+ 44 Kf2 Qc5+ 45 Re3 Rd2+ 46 Kf3 Qc2) 43 ... Rd1+ 44 Kf2 Qd2+ 45 Re2 Qd4+ 46 Kg2 g4!

39 ... Qc6 40 Ra8+ Kh7 41 Qb1+ g6 42 Qf1 (a last test of Black's vigilance: if now 42 ... Qxa8?? then the reply 43 Qxf7+ forces a draw) **42 ... Qc5+ 43 Kh1 Qd5+ 0-1**

In view of the inevitable 44 Kg1 Rd1 White resigned.

With the score standing at 4-1 after the ninth game, only a miracle could save Korchnoi. His nerves, to all appearances, were at breaking point. Karpov: 'He insulted me during the 8th and 9th games. In the 10th he was probably afraid that the arbiters would install microphones and record his words, and so he simply talked rubbish.'

Rude Pravo (Czechoslovakia): 'During the 9th and 10th games the world champion had to raise his hand five times as an indication that he was requesting the chief arbiter Paul Klein to come to the board. Klein: "During play Korchnoi swore at Karpov in Russian, insulted him and

besmeared his country. We several times reprimanded Korchnoi.” The play and correct behaviour of the world champion is in sharp contrast with Korchnoi’s behaviour.’

UPI News Agency: ‘After the 12th game Karpov accused the challenger of having “shouted insulting words at him” and of constantly preventing him from concentrating, by intentionally waving his hands. In reply to this complaint, Korchnoi said that he had merely asked Karpov not to swivel in his chair and not distract him.’

At three o’clock in the morning after the 12th game Baturinsky handed Gligoric, the chairman of the appeal jury, a written protest by the world champion with the required deposit of 500 Swiss Francs. The following day the jury gave the challenger an official warning, and informed him that ‘a similar repeat violation would be penalised by a fine of 15,000 Swiss Francs.’

But these outbursts were merely a pale shadow of the previous match ... After his win in the 13th game (*Game No.36*) a faint ray of hope for Korchnoi appeared, but the very next game showed that here there would be no ‘second Baguio’.

Yuri Razuvaev, who was at that time working as coach for the USSR Sports Committee, remembers: ‘Late one evening, after the 6th game, Geller and I were suddenly summoned to Ivonin, the deputy head of the Sports Committee, and asked to report the following morning to his office, in order to “urgently devise for Tolya some novelty in the Ruy Lopez.” True, at the same time, he enquired: “Is this possible?” Geller replied: “Well, we’ll try.” The following morning, in the corner of his enormous office, we saw a writing desk, and on it – a chessboard and pieces, pens and clean sheets of paper. Alongside, on a trolley, were bottles of mineral water and caviar sandwiches. As soon as Geller and I sat down to analyse, Ivonin said in a business-like way: “Well, everything seems to be in order. I won’t disturb you.” And he went out, locking the door behind him ... The analysis took us the whole of the working day. That was how the idea 13 Ne4!? was born. I wrote all our variations on the sheets of paper and handed them to Ivonin ... ’

Zaitsev: ‘In the 14th game there occurred one of the two venomous, although transitory novelties in the Open Variation of the Spanish, which decided the outcome of the match. That day an interesting idea of Geller was used, one that he had discovered together with Razuvaev – 13 Ne4!? True, in order to decipher the notes, hand-written on sheets of paper, and present this discovery to Karpov in a suitable form, I had

to sacrifice a desirable trip to Venice, which our entire delegation visited during a three-day break.'

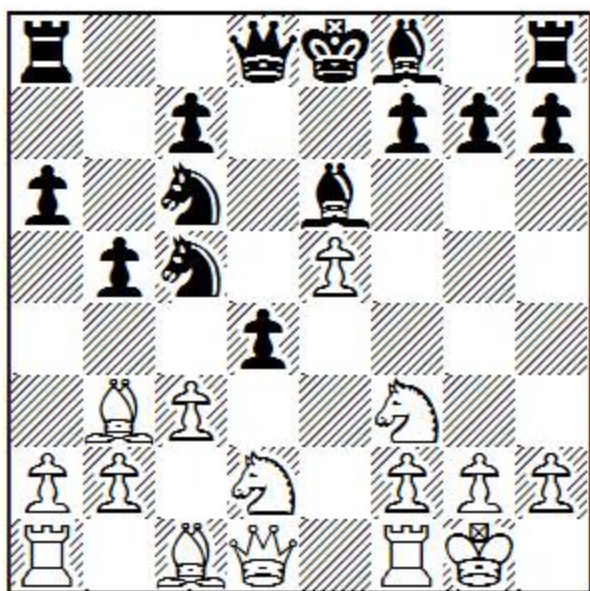
Game 85

A.Karpov-V.Korchnoi

World Championship Match, Merano 1981, 14th game

Ruy Lopez C80

1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bb5 a6 4 Ba4 Nf6 5 0-0 Nxe4 6 d4 b5 7 Bb3 d5 8 dxe5 Be6 9 Nbd2
(avoiding 9 c3 – *Game Nos.35 and 75*) 9 ... Nc5 10 c3 d4



11 Bxe6

'In the 10th game of the match in Baguio, Karpov played 11 Ng5!?, but, as subsequent games and analyses showed, in this case Black has sufficient counterplay,' wrote Polugayevsky, with no suspicion of the knight move's future popularity.

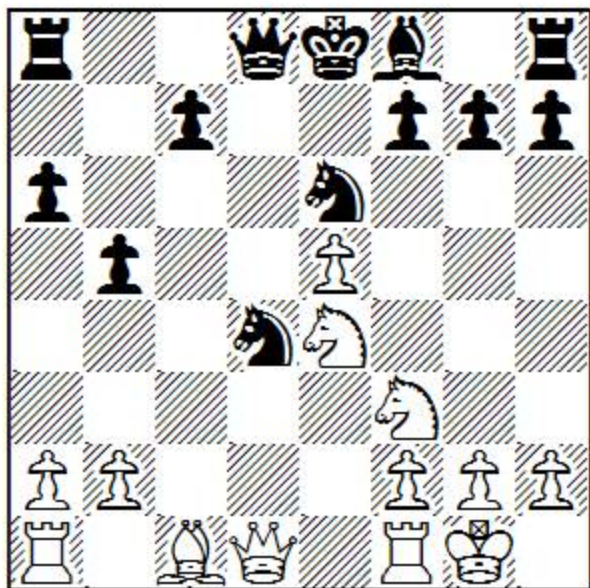
11 ... Nxe6 12 cxd4

Neither 12 a4 dxc3 13 bxc3 b4 14 Qc2 Qd5! (G.Kuzmin-Dorfman, 46th USSR Championship, Tbilisi 1978), nor 12 Nb3 dxc3 13 Qc2 Qd5 14 Rd1? Nb4! 15 Qe2 Qc4! (Sax-Tal, Tallinn 1979) sets Black any serious problems.

12 ... Ncxd4 13 Ne4

This is one of those novelties which helped to break the resistance of Korchnoi, who was on the point of 'reviving'. The effect of such surprises is very strong, since in the course of the match it is hard for the opponent to find a worthy antidote. Then he has to change his main opening, and the reserve one may not always be equivalent in terms of quality and degree of preparedness.

Usually 13 Nxd4 Qxd4 was played, for example: 14 Qe2 Rd8 15 a4 Qd5! 16 axb5 axb5 17 Qe4 (not 17 Ra5? Bb4! 18 Rxb5 Nd4) 17 ... Bc5 18 Qxd5 Rxd5 with an excellent endgame for Black (Adams-Anand, 2nd matchgame, Linares 1994). Eighty years before this after 14 Qf3 Rd8 15 a4 (not 15 Qc6+ Qd7 16 Qxa6 Bb4!) 15 ... Qd5 16 Qxd5 Rxd5 17 axb5 axb5 18 Ra8+ Nd8 19 Ne4! Rxe5 20 Rd1 Be7 21 f3 Rf5?! 22 Rc8 White for a long time held the initiative in a similar type of ending (Capablanca-Lasker, St Petersburg 1914), but soon the best prescription became known – 15 ... Bb4! with equality.



13 ... Be7

Korchnoi thought for 79 minutes over this move, establishing what was then a record for world championship matches. I managed to beat this dubious achievement, when in the opening of the 2nd game of my match with Karpov in Seville (1987) I thought for 83 minutes!

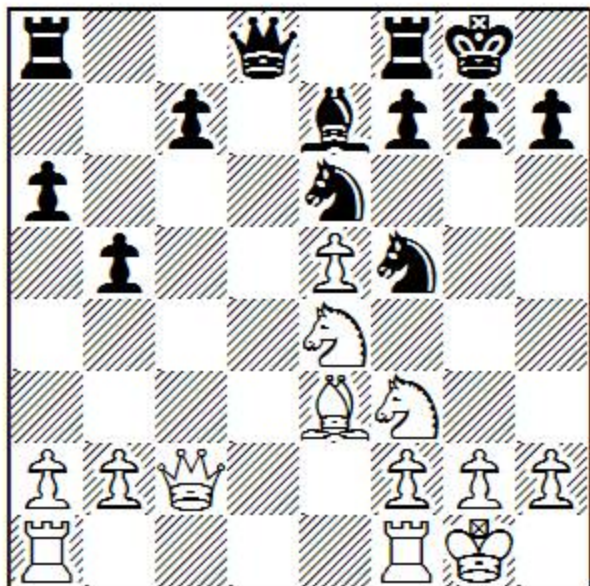
On encountering another surprise, Korchnoi preferred to make the move that was most useful, even on general grounds. The other typical

manoeuvre 13 ... Qd5?! was rightly condemned by Karpov: after 14 Nxd4 Nxd4 15 Nc3 Qd7 16 Be3 Bc5 17 Qh5 or 14 ... Qxe4 15 Nxe6 fxe6 16 Qh5+ g6 17 Qh3 White firmly seizes the initiative.

14 Be3 Nxf3+?

Essentially the only mistake in the game, but at the same time an irreparable one. One can't help remembering the 2nd game of their 1974 match and Korchnoi's losing move 19 ... R4c5? immediately after an opening novelty by the opponent (*Game No.67*).

It is obvious that the knight cannot be maintained in the centre: 14 ... c5 15 b4! (with the sequel 15 ... Nxf3+ 16 Qxf3 c4 17 Rfd1 Qc8 18 Nd6+ Bxd6 19 exd6 0-0 20 d7). However, its exchange is also bad, merely assisting the rapid activation of the white forces. In his next 'black' game Korchnoi found the correct way – 14 ... Nf5! 15 Qc2 0-0.



Analysis diagram

16 Neg5 Bxg5! 17 Nxg5 g6 18 Nxe6 fxe6 19 Rae1 Qd5 20 b3 Rac8 with equality. Later White tried much more often to fight for an advantage by 16 Rad1!? Nxe3 17 fxe3 Qc8 and then, mainly, 18 Nd4 or 18 h3:

1) 18 Nd4 Nxd4 19 exd4 Qe6! 20 Ng3! (20 Qxc7 Rac8 21 Qa5 Rc2 with excellent compensation) 20 ... c6 (it is amusing that the trap 20 ... f6? 21 Nf5! fxe5? 22 Qb3! 1-0 ensnared two strong grandmasters: Tseshkovsky-Yusupov, Erevan 1982; Chandler-Nunn,

Naestved 1985) 21 Nf5 Rfe8 22 Rd3 Bf8 23 Rh3 g6 24 Nh6+ Bxh6 25 Rxh6 c5 with equality (Short-Yusupov, Montpellier Candidates 1985);

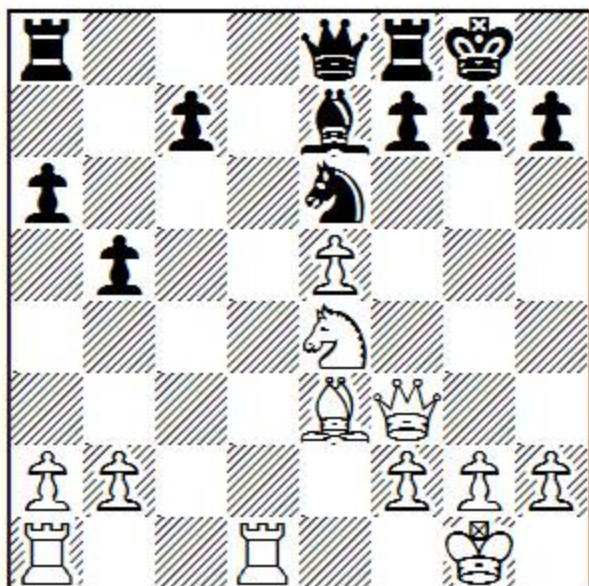
2) 18 h3 Rd8 19 Nh2 Rxd1 20 Qxd1 Qe8! (the game Geller-Tal, Sochi 1986, went 20 ... Nc5, and here, in Tal's opinion, 21 Qd5! would have given White the advantage) 21 Qh5 Nc5 22 Ng3 a5! 23 Nf5 Ra6 24 Ng4 Rg6, seizing the initiative (Tal-Korchnoi, Reykjavik 1987).

15 Qxf3 0-0 16 Rfd1

The most logical move, strengthening White's position in the centre. Karpov hesitated for a long time before making his choice, since he wanted to keep his rook on the f-file and advance his f2-pawn. But this could have reduced the effect of the opening novelty and led to an unclear position: 16 Qg3?! Qd5! 17 Nf6+ Bxf6 18 exf6 Qf5 19 fxg7 Rfd8 (Karpov), or even 18 ... g6 19 Qh4 Qf5.

16 ... Qe8

The queen has not managed to jump to d5 and is now forced to huddle on the back ranks. Karpov thinks that Korchnoi did not choose the least of the evils. However, other queen moves – 16 ... Qc8 17 Rac1 Rd8 18 Nd6 Bxd6 19 exd6 or 16 ... Qb8 17 Qg4 c5 18 f4 Qc7 19 Nd6 – also lead to situations where hopes of saving the game are associated only with a possible mistake by the opponent.



17 Nf6+! Bxf6

The consequences of 17 ... gxf6? 18 exf6 Bd6 19 Rd4! followed by 20 Rh4 are too transparent.

18 exf6 Qc8 19 fxg7

For the moment there is no crushing attack – 19 Qg3 Rd8 20 f4? g6 21 f5 Nf8, and Karpov chooses a continuation which in the end leaves White a pawn up.

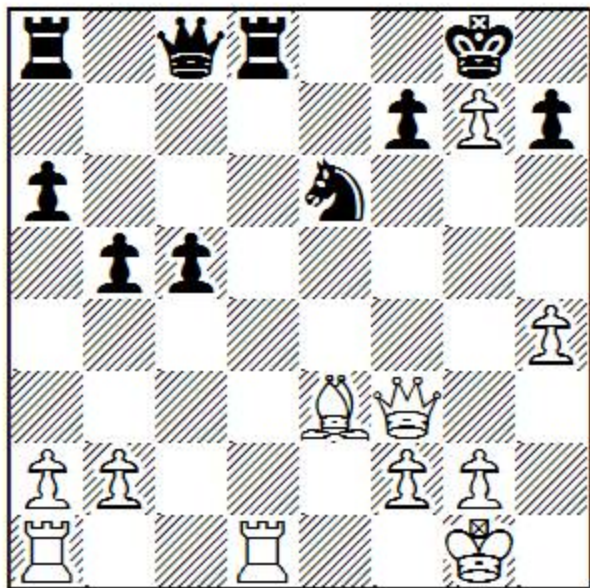
19 ... Rd8

Of course, not 19 ... Kxg7? 20 Bh6+! Kxh6 21 Qf6+ with mate, while after 19 ... Nxg7 White not only picks up the c7-pawn (20 Rac1 or 20 Qg3), but can also create an attack against the weakened castled position. Korchnoi does not intend to give up his c-pawn, and he hopes that the white pawn at g7 will defend his king against a frontal attack.

20 h4

Karpov saw that there was nothing to stop the pawn advancing to h6, but at the same time he allows Black a little activity. The winner criticises himself, thinking that 'the prophylactic move 20 b4 should have been considered, so as to halt all Black's play and in the end force him to take the g-pawn, exposing his king.'

20 ... c5



21 Rac1

'Technically the strongest solution was 21 Rxd8+ Qxd8 22 Rd1 Nd4 23 Bxd4 cxd4 24 Qe4!, and the h-pawn advances unhindered.'

(Karpov)

21 ... Qc7 22 h5

‘Engrossed in my idea, I allow the opponent to activate his pieces at last and to gain counterplay,’ writes Karpov. ‘I should have continued 22 Qf6! Rxd1+ 23 Rxd1 Rd8 24 Rxd8+ Qxd8 25 Qxd8+ Nxd8 26 Bxc5; while 22 b4 c4 23 h5 was also quite good.’

But there is no reason for such self-reproach –White’s position is easily won all the same.

22 ... Qe5! 23 h6 Qxb2

_____W
[rDW4WDkD]
[DWDWDp)p]
[pDWDnDW)]
[Dp0WDWDW]
[WDWDWDWD]
[DWDWGQDW]
[P1WDW)PD]
[DW\$RDWIW]
W-----W

It was this position that Karpov had aimed at from afar. But, in his words, ‘I had evidently underestimated something: I had to think for a long time.’

24 Rd7

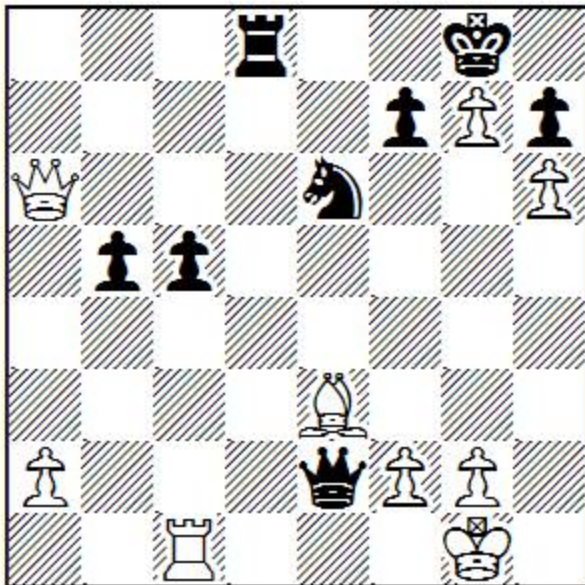
A spectacular move, which also wins the a6-pawn. ‘Apparently the only move ... In the event of 24 Bxc5 Nxc5 25 Rxc5 Qxa2 26 Rd7 Black has the reply 26 ... Rab8 27 Qf4 Ra8.’ (Karpov)

However, surrounded by the g7- and h6-pawns, the king still falls prey to the white pieces: 28 Re7 Qb1+ 29 Kh2 Qg6 30 Rf5 Rd4 31 Qe3! Rdd8 32 Rxf7 Qxf7 33 Rxf7 Kxf7 34 Qf3+, and 34 ... Kg6 is not possible because of 35 g4. Instead of 27 ... Ra8 Black can immediately enlist the aid of the queen with 27 ... Qe6. Then 28 Rcd5! Re8 (if 28 ... Qe8, then 29 Qxf7+ Qxf7 30 Rxd8+ Qe8 31 Rxe8+ Rxe8 32 Rd7 – the path for the f2-pawn is open: 32 ... b4 33 f4 b3 34 Rb7) 29 g3 (avoiding

29 R5d6 Qe1+ 30 Kh2 Qe5) 29 ... Rb7 (after 29 ... b4 30 R5d6 Qa2 White most easily approaches the f7-point with 31 Kg2 followed by 32 Rd5) 30 R7d6 Qe1+ 31 Kg2 Rbe7 32 Rxa6 b4 33 Rb6, and Black also loses his b-pawn.

I should also mention the immediate 24 ... Qxa2. Here too White achieves his aim, by exploiting the threat of invading the back rank: 25 Rxd8+ Rxd8 26 Bb6 Qd2 (26 ... Rb8 27 Qb7!) 27 Qc6 Rb8 28 f4! (not immediately 28 Qc8+ Nd8; with 28 f4 White has defended the h6-pawn in the variation 28 ... b4 29 Qc8+ Nd8 30 Qxb8 Qxc1+ 31 Kh2) 28 ... Qxf4 29 Qc8+ Nd8 30 Re1! Karpov was undoubtedly right when he advanced his pawn to h6!

24 ... Rxd7 25 Qxa8+ Rd8 26 Qxa6 Qe2!



27 Rf1?!

Black was threatening perpetual check, but it is only now that he gains some counterplay.

Karpov avoided the natural 27 g3 because of 27 ... Nd4 28 Bxd4 cxd4, coming to the conclusion that 'Black parries the mating threats and the d-pawn becomes dangerous.' It seems to me that the win is not difficult here: 29 Qf6! Qe8 (29 ... Ra8 30 Qxd4 Qxa2 31 Qd7 Qa6? 32 Rc6) 30 Rc7 Rd7 31 Qc6 Rd8 32 Qxe8+ Rxe8 33 Rd7. It is possible that White also wins even by 28 Rxc5 Nf3+ 29 Kg2 Ne1+ 30 Kh3 Qf1+ 31 Kg4. The waiting move 27 ... Qb2 is more tenacious, although White

should not experience any serious problems, for example: 28 a4 bxa4 (or 28 ... b4 29 Qb6 b3 30 Rxc5 Qa1+ 31 Kh2 Qxa4 32 Re5) 29 Qxa4 Nd4 30 Rxc5 Qb1+ 31 Kh2 Nf3+ 32 Kg2 Ne1+ 33 Kh3 Nd3 34 Rf5 Qh1+ 35 Kg4 – here the king is safe, and White converts his material without particular difficulty.

27 ... Rd1 28 Qa8+ Rd8

‘But not 28 ... Nd8 because of 29 Rxd1 Qxd1+ 30 Kh2 Qh5+ 31 Kg3 Qg6+ 32 Kh4 Qf6+ 33 Kh3! Qe6+ 34 g4 – the checks come to an end, and White wins.’ (Karpov)

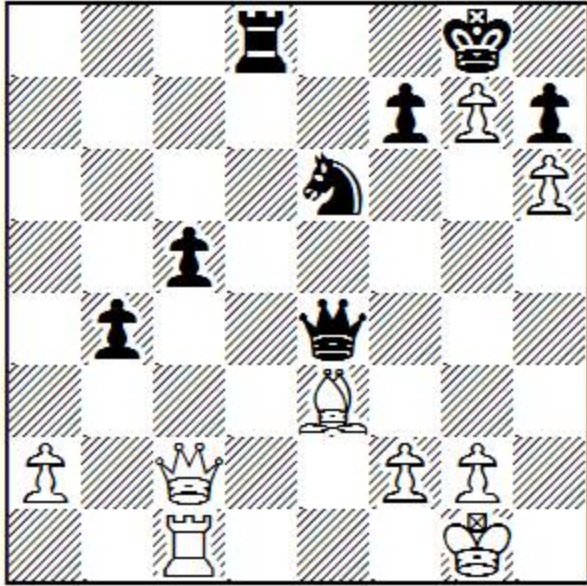
29 Qc6! b4

Within three moves the c4-square will be blockaded by White, but to avoid ... b5-b4 in favour of waiting tactics would be pointless. In this type of situation Black must seek chances in a nervy battle at the board, not in the analysis of an adjourned game. Objectively too, in the event of 29 ... Qd3 30 Rc1 Qe2 31 g3 Qb2 32 Kg2 Black’s possibilities are exhausted, and after 32 ... Qxa2 33 Bxc5 the finish is close.

30 Qa4! Qd3 31 Rc1 Qd5 32 Qb3 Qe4

The exchange of rooks – 32 ... Qh5 33 Qc4 Rd1+ 34 Rxd1 Qxd1+ would have led to an endgame that is easily won for White: 35 Kh2 Qh5+ 36 Kg3 Qg6+ 37 Kf3 Qf6+ (37 ... Qh5+ 38 g4 Ng5+ 39 Bxg5 Qxg5 40 Qa6 Qd5+ 41 Kg3 Qe5+ 42 Kh3 Qe8 43 f3 – zugzwang follows) 38 Ke2 Qb2+ 39 Kf1 Qa1+ 40 Bc1. There are no more checks, and with his immobile king Black cannot resist: 40 ... Qd4 41 Qxd4 Nxd4 42 Be3 Ne6 43 g4 c4 44 Ke2.

33 Qc2

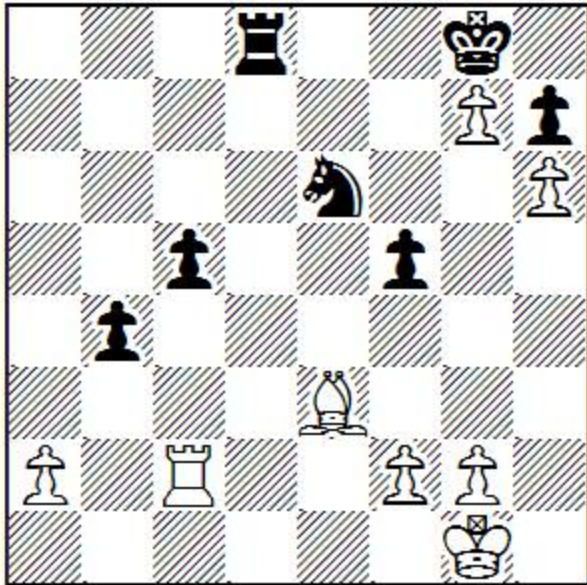


33 ... Qxc2?

In time-trouble Korchnoi exchanges his most active piece. White would have been set more problems by 33 ... Qg4!, and after 34 Bxc5? Rc8 35 Qd2 the cavalry attack 35 ... Nf4! would completely confuse the situation: 36 f3 Qg5 37 Rc2 Qxh6 38 Qxb4 Qg6.

34 f3 Qg3 35 Qe4 Qd6 36 Kf2 would have retained a decisive advantage, although in this position the opponent can still continue to resist. It is quite probable that in the event of 33 ... Qg4! the adjourning of the game would not have been a formality.

34 Rxc2 f5



35 f4! Kf7

It is curious that after 35 ... Rd5 White also wins (apart from by 36 Kf2 or 36 Re2) by 36 g4 fxg4 37 Rc4, intending Re4 and Kg2-g3. Black's helplessness is absolute – such is the strength of the protected g7-pawn.

36 g4! Rd5 37 gxg4 Rxf5 38 Rd2 Rf6 39 Rd7+ Kg8 40 f5!

The h6-pawn must be retained. Although after 40 Re7?! Rg6+ 41 Kf2 Rxh6 42 f5 Rf6 43 Rxe6 Rxf5+ 44 Ke2 Kxg7 White is a bishop up, it does not control the queening square of the last white pawn. Thanks to the rooks being still on the board, White should win, but the game could have dragged out.

40 ... Rxf5 41 Re7

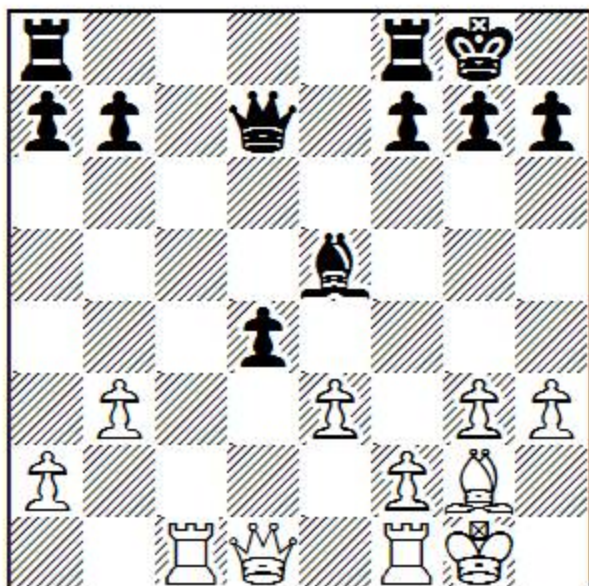
The remaining moves need not have been made, but Korchnoi did not want to hear the applause in honour of the winner.

41 ... Nxg7 42 Rxc7+ Kh8 43 Rc7 Kg8 44 Bxc5 Rg5+ 45 Kf2 Rg6 46 Be3

Black sealed the secret move 46 ... Ra6, but the following day he resigned (1-0) without resuming.

The score became 5-2. Zaitsev: 'The fact that the end of the match was now close was eloquently indicated by the 15th game, in which, by a clever and unexpected bishop sacrifice, Korchnoi won a pawn in a position with heavy pieces and opposite-coloured bishops. But the way

he chose to convert the advantage proved too simplifying, and did not pose Karpov any great problems.



20 Rc5

‘Even during the game it seemed to us that the immediate 20 exd4 was stronger, and if 20 ... Bxd4 – 21 Rc5! After 21 ... Rad8 22 Rd5 Qxd5 23 Bxd5 Rxd5 24 Qf3 Rfd8 25 Re1 it would have taken Black a further few dozen moves to demonstrate a draw.

20 ... Bf6 21 Rd5?!

‘White should probably not have hurried with this move: after 21 exd4 Rd8 (21 ... Rac8, recommended by Korchnoi in *Informator*, is no better) he could have tried to break up his opponent’s defences by 22 Ra5!? In the event of the straightforward 22 ... b6?! 23 Rd5 White’s chances are improved in view of the weakening of the c6-square. A tactical solution, easily found by a computer, is evidently better – 22 ... Qc7 23 Rxa7 Bxd4 24 Rxb7 Bxf2+ 25 Kh1 Qxg3 26 Qf3 Rd2 27 Qxg3 Bxg3, but here too after 28 a4 f6 29 a5 Rf7 30 a6 White retains chances of success.

21 ... Qc7 22 exd4 Rad8, and Black gained a draw on move 41.

‘It was felt that Korchnoi no longer had his former energy and persistence. One could cite several modern examples, where with this balance of material the stronger side was able to create considerable difficulties for his opponent.’

The next two games also produced draws. Tal: 'I was not even very concerned about what score Karpov won by. The only thing, I thought, was that he should not repeat the mistakes of Baguio. He did not repeat them. It is true that at several points the match scores coincided, but at that the analogies with Baguio concluded. And when with the score standing at 5-2 he made three draws, I didn't worry, since not once was Karpov in serious danger of losing. And by the 18th game all the objective data, including my "inner voice", pointed to the fact that it was time for the match to end.'

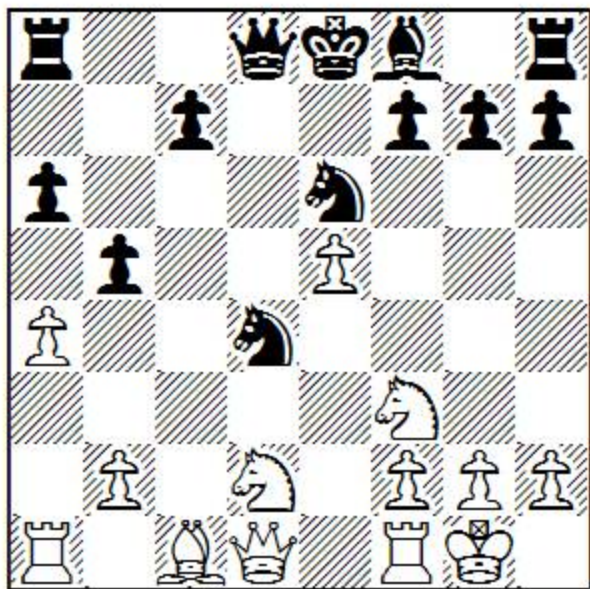
Game 86

A.Karpov-V.Korchnoi

World Championship Match, Merano 1981, 18th game

Ruy Lopez C80

1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bb5 a6 4 Ba4 Nf6 5 0-0 Nxe4 6 d4 b5 7 Bb3 d5 8 dxe5 Be6 9 Nbd2 Nc5 10 c3 d4 11 Bxe6 Nxe6 12 cxd4 Ncxd4 13 a4!



This suggestion was made by Polugayevsky. 'Here everything was much simpler: the author of the idea was in Merano and he himself was able to put it into an appropriate form.' (Zaitsev). A joint analysis showed that there were just as many dangerous pitfalls here for Black, as after 13 Ne4 (*Game No.85*).

And despite the fact that the opponent had not yet solved all his opening problems after the knight move, it was decided to test his reaction to another novelty. The effect exceeded all expectations! Korchnoi thought for 54 minutes over his reply and did not choose the best plan of defence.

13 ... Be7?!

Present-day practice has sifted out both 13 ... Be7 and 13 ... Rb8. In the latter case the endgame arising after 14 axb5 axb5 15 Ne4 Be7 16 Be3 Nf5 17 Ba7 Qxd1 18 Rfxd1 Rd8 19 g4 Rxd1+ 20 Rxd1 is difficult for Black, for example: 20 ... Nh4 21 Nxh4 Bxh4 22 Be3 (Smirin-Hübner, Polanica Zdroj 1995), or 20 ... Nh6 21 h3 f5 22 exf6 gxf6 23 Be3 (C.Hansen-I.Sokolov, Malmö 1997).

For a time 13 ... Bc5 was considered best. After 14 Ne4 Bb6 White has a fair choice, but the most promising is probably 15 Nfg5!? Good chances of equalising are given by 14 ... 0-0 15 Nxc5 Nxf3+ 16 Qxf3 Nxc5 17 axb5 axb5 18 Bg5. This position was considered clearly better for White, until Black resorted to the radical measure of sacrificing his queen – 18 ... Rxa1 19 Bxd8 Rxf1+ 20 Kxf1 Rxd8. This occurred, in particular, in the game Topalov-Anand (Dos Hermanas 1996), where after 21 g3 (not 21 Qc6 Ne6 22 Qxb5?? Rd1+ 23 Ke2 Nd4+) 21 ... Ne6 22 Qb7 g6 23 Qxb5 c5 24 h4 h5 Black set up a seemingly impregnable fortress. But later, in the 21st century, after 14 Ne4 he only replied 14 ... Bb6. The question suggests itself: is the fortress really impregnable?

Nowadays 13 ... Bb4 has come to the forefront, although in the game Kramnik-Shirov (Monaco rapidplay 2005) Black quickly ended up in a difficult position: 14 axb5 Nxf3+? 15 Nxf3 axb5 16 Rxa8 Qxa8 17 Ng5! Also, 14 ... axb5? 15 Rxa8 Qxa8 16 Nxd4 Nxd4 17 Qg4 is bad for him. Therefore 14 ... Nxb5 is played, but after 15 Ne4 0-0 16 Be3 (Shirov-Anand, Mainz rapidplay 2004) or 15 Qa4 Be7 16 Ne4 (Svidler-I.Sokolov, Wijk aan Zee 2005) Black encounters certain difficulties.

It has to be said that modern practice does not offer an absolutely reliable prescription against 13 a4!

14 Nxd4 Nxd4

After making several attempts to defend the position after 14 ... Qxd4 15 axb5 Qxe5 16 bxa6 0-0 17 Qa4, Black has remained dissatisfied with the results:

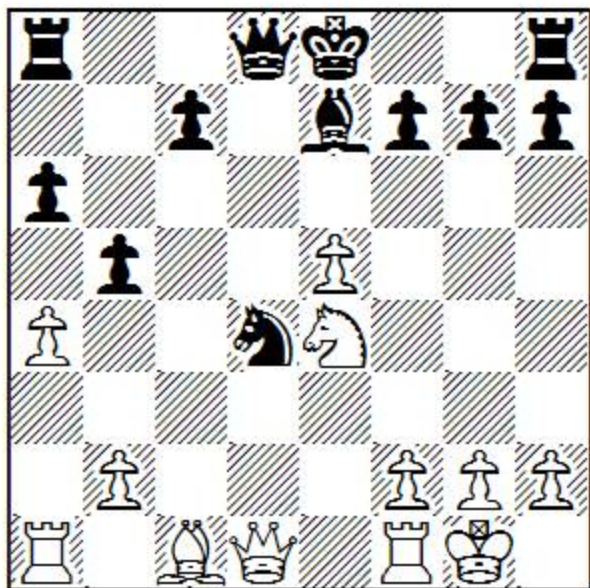
1) 17 ... Rfb8 18 a7 Rb7 19 Nf3 Qd5 (or 19 ... Qb5 20 Qxb5 Rxb5 21 Be3 Bf6 22 Ra2 Hjartarson-Smejkal, Bundesliga 1989) 20 Be3 Bc5

21 Rad1 Qb3 22 Qxb3 Rxb3 23 Bxc5 Nxc5 24 Nd4 (Ehlvest-Main, Tallinn 1989);

2) 17 ... Nc5 18 Qc4 Rfb8 19 Ra5 Qd6 20 Ne4 Nxe4 21 Qxe4 Qb4 22 Qxb4 Bxb4 23 Ra4 Rb6 24 a7 Bc5 25 Rd1 (Topalov-Korchnoi, Madrid 1996). It would appear that Korchnoi could have saved this endgame by playing 25 ... Rb7 (26 Be3 Bxe3 27 fxe3 Kf8), but also White's advantage could have become tangible in the event of 19 Nf3! Qe6 20 Qxe6 fxe6 21 a7 Rb7 22 Nd4 or 22 Be3.

15 Ne4

This thematic move 'secures White a solid advantage both with the queens on, and after their exchange.' (Karpov)



15 ... Ne6?

The knight cannot be maintained in the centre. Korchnoi did not want to move it away from the kingside, but at e6 its position is insecure. 15 ... 0-0 16 axb5 Nxb5 17 Be3 Qc8 was nevertheless better – the knight, protected by the a6-pawn, would itself defend the other pawn island, and the queen, after moving to e6 or f5, would hinder the development of White's attack.

At one time such a set-up was practised by Yusupov, who is famed for his tenacity in defence. He had problems in three games from 1989 – with Ivanchuk (Linares), Adams and Chandler (both Hastings), and did not find any followers. In the variation 13 ... Bb4 14 axb5 Nxb5 (cf.

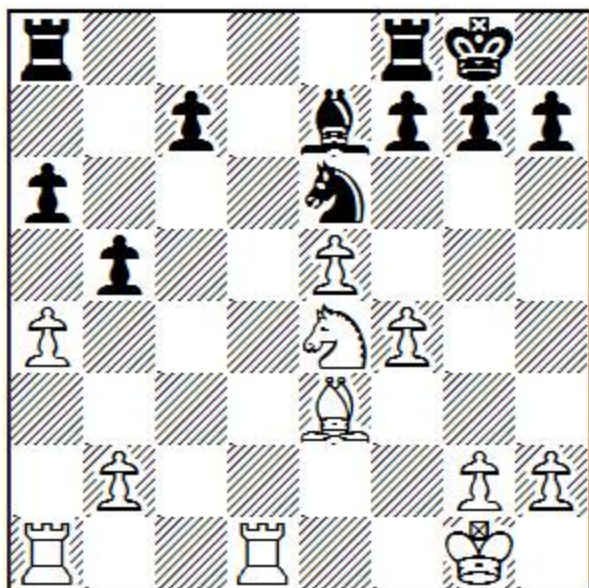
above) positions with a similar pattern arise, but with the knights on f3 and e6 – there it is easier for Black to defend.

16 Be3 0-0 17 f4 Qxd1

If 17 ... g6 Karpov was ready to play 18 g4!, ensuring the advance f4-f5.

18 Rfxd1

As a result of his badly played opening, Black has ended up in a difficult position without a hint of counterplay.



18 ... Rfb8?!

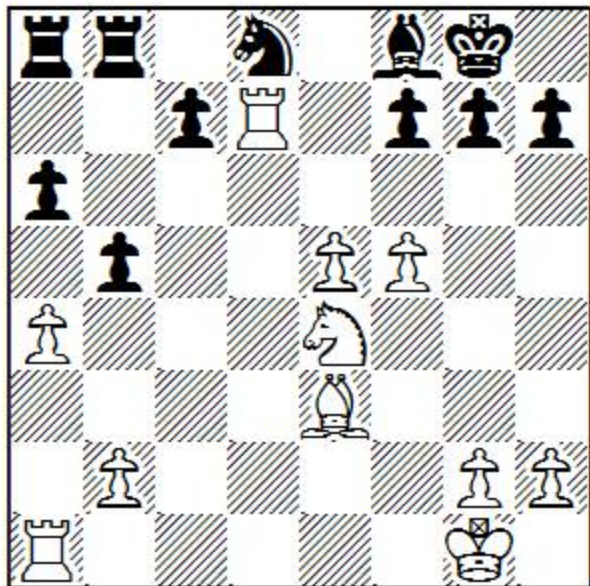
Black's hopes of activating his rooks are not destined to be realised, whereas the appearance of a white rook on the 7th rank makes a catastrophe inevitable. The 'resolute' 18 ... f5 19 exf6 Bxf6 (or 19 ... gxf6 20 f5 Ng7 21 g4) 20 Nxf6+ (20 f5 Bxb2 21 fxe6 Bxa1 22 Rxa1 followed by Nc5 is perhaps even stronger) 20 ... gxf6 21 f5 Ng7 22 g4 looks very unattractive. The best chance was to simplify by 18 ... Rfd8 19 axb5 axb5 20 Rxa8 Rxa8 21 f5 Rd8 (21 ... Nf8 22 Rc1! Ra4? 23 Nc3) 22 Rxd8+ (22 Rc1 Nd4) 22 ... Nxd8. Despite White's obvious superiority, Black could have hoped to save the game, thanks to the limited material remaining.

19 Rd7 Bf8

'19 ... Bd8 was more tenacious, although even in this case after 20 a5 Nf8 21 Rd3 Black's position is far from pleasant.' (Karpov). Indeed,

despite the material equality, the disharmony in the placing of Black's pieces and his bad pawn structure make his position objectively lost.

20 f5 Nd8



21 a5!

The pawn capture 21 Rxc7 (which is what, evidently, Korchnoi was hoping for) would have allowed the rook to become active: 21 ... bxa4 22 Bd4 Rb4 23 Rd1 (Keene) 23 ... Rb7 (pointed out by Karpov) 24 Rxb7 Nxb7 25 Ra1 a3 26 bxa3 Rd8. By postponing the winning of material, with consistent play the world champion denies his opponent the slightest chance.

21 ... Nc6 22 e6! fxe6 23 f6!

Powerful play. 'It would seem that Korchnoi underestimated this move when he played 19 ... Bf8.' (Karpov). I think that Korchnoi underestimated the whole series of White's last few moves, when he placed his rook on b8.

23 ... Ne5

It is possible to lure the rook off the 7th rank, but at too high a price: 23 ... Rd8 24 Rxc7 Rac8 25 f7+ Kh8 26 Rxc8 Rxc8 27 Rc1 (Karpov) 27 ... Ne7 28 Rxc8 Nxc8 29 Nc5, and a piece has to be given up for the f7-pawn. It is also unbearable to endure the rook there: 23 ... Rc8 24 Rc1! Nxa5 25 Bd4 Rd8 26 Rxc7 Rxd7 27 Rxd7 Nc6 28 fxg7 Be7 29 Rc7! Rd8 30 Be3.

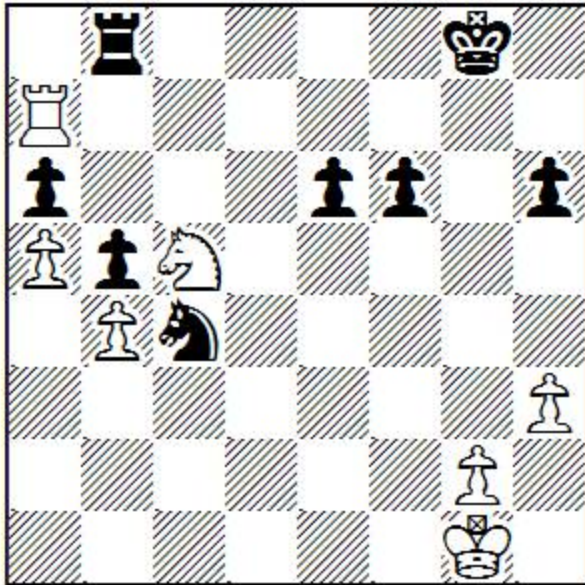
‘There is no reason to hurry. This move secures a quiet refuge for the king.’ (Karpov). I relate differently to chess time in general and to prophylaxis in particular. This is evidently why our chess styles are so dissimilar.

This is not prophylaxis in return – Black simply has no useful moves. He also loses after 27 ... Rd7 28 Rc8 Rd1+ 29 Kf2 gxf6 30 Nxf6+ Kg7 31 Nxf7 or 31 Ke2.

28 ... Nc4

29 Bb6! Rb8 30 Bc5 Bxc5+ 31 Nxc5 gxf6 32 b4!

A technically accurate decision. For an instant Black is a pawn up, but his position is still absolutely hopeless. This was the right time to resign, but Korchnoi, as in the last game in Baguio, wanted to hold out until the adjournment. The remainder is clear without any commentary.



32 ... Rd8 33 Rxa6 Kf7 34 Ra7+ Kg6 35 Rd7! Re8 36 a6 Ra8 37 Rb7 Kf5 38 Rxb5 Ke5 39 Rb7 Kd5 40 Rf7! f5 41 Rf6

Korchnoi sealed 41 ... e5, after which White has a whole range of winning moves: 42 Nd7, 42 Na4, 42 Rxf5 ... But, as was expected, there was no adjournment session. Two hours before it was due to begin, Black resigned (1-0), and the match concluded with the score 6-2 (plus 10 draws) in Karpov's favour.

Baturinsky remembers that Korchnoi first sent Klein a hand-written note in English: 'I inform you that I am resigning the 18th game and the entire match, and I congratulate Karpov and the entire Soviet delegation on their excellent electronic technology. Korchnoi.' As is evident, the challenger sincerely believed that the cause of his defeat was the effect of mysterious electronic rays. However, when a few hours later Baturinsky asked Klein to make a photocopy of this note, the latter laughingly replied: 'It doesn't exist!'

Here is a present-day summary by Zaitsev: 'It appears that it was these concluding salvoes, fired at the Open Variation, which brought Karpov victory in the match. Formally that is so, but in my opinion the main reason for Korchnoi's defeat was that he was excessively carried away by set-ups where the strategic situation in the centre was determined too early. As a very strong strategist, he should possibly have directed all his efforts towards seeking (or, in the end,

discovering) set-ups where for quite a long time a strategic (not positional, but strategic!) struggle would have been maintained. That is, a struggle for control over the processes of structure formation. A prompt for Korchnoi could have been provided, at the least, by two of his old wins over Karpov – in Hastings (1971/72) and in the 19th game of their Moscow match (1974), where a compact queen's pawn opening was played. Later such a course was quite deliberately and not unsuccessfully chosen against Karpov by other match opponents – Yusupov (1989) and Anand (1998).'

The opinions of well-known grandmasters, expressed immediately after the match, are also interesting in their own way.

Polugayevsky: 'I sensed the mood of the world champion – not only to win the match, but to gain a convincing victory. He approached the event professionally, in the best sense of the word.'

Geller: 'The fifth hour of play, which is especially difficult for players, was completely Karpov's. He managed practically without any time-troubles and, above all, he did not permit himself the premature inner demobilisation, which more than once let him down in Baguio. The world champion also won the theoretical duel. His practical and analytical work proved very accurately balanced.'

Gligoric: 'The quality of play in Merano was much higher – far fewer mistakes, than in many other similar matches. Karpov played excellently, and he now has no equals, therefore there is no point in judging his opponent's play too severely. The match provided some exceptionally important conclusions for opening theory.'

Schmid: 'Karpov is an outstanding phenomenon. But apart from his exceptional talent, which showed itself at an early age, he also needed excellent conditions in which it could develop. The present world champion is a universal player of the highest class.'

Olafsson: 'A convincing win! We face three years for selecting Karpov's future opponent, and at the moment it is not easy to say who will compete with him. Among the most probable contenders I would name Timman, Kasparov, Korchnoi, and also Beliavsky and Balashov. One thing is certain: today Karpov is the strongest player in the world.'

Larsen: 'I predicted the 6-2 score a long time ago, and I was wrong only about the total number of games; I thought there would be 22. In all the post-war period there has been no other world championship match where the champion was so superior to the challenger. I think that the next contender for the crown will be Timman, or Beliavsky, or ... Larsen.

Kasparov? When he sacrifices, he is always sure that he will win – he is too great an optimist!’

Najdorf: ‘I have to apologise to Karpov. Up till now I regarded him as an accurate chess worker. In Merano he showed himself to be a genius. That which he does can be compared with the play of Capablanca in the period of his greatest fame. I would place Anatoly among the best players in history.’

Nine years later, after cooling down somewhat, even Korchnoi admitted in an interview that Karpov was a real world champion and that he had occupied a worthy place in chess history ...

Who's next?

On the results of 1981, journalists awarded Karpov another – already the eighth! – chess ‘Oscar’, with his contemporary and long-standing rival Jan Timman in second place. And the Dutch grandmaster promptly confirmed his strength, by brilliantly winning a strong tournament in Mar del Plata (February 1982): 1. Timman – $9\frac{1}{2}$ out of 13; 2. Portisch – 8; 3-5. Karpov, Polugayevsky and Seirawan – $7\frac{1}{2}$; 6. Andersson – 7, etc.

Starting from the 3rd round, Timman scored eight successive wins(!), including one over Karpov – again with Black in a Sicilian Defence (cf. *Game No.89*, note to White’s 9th move). After such a spurt there was no question about the winner of the tournament. But what about the world champion?

Polugayevsky: ‘The chess world is already accustomed to Karpov finishing only first. But it cannot be forgotten that little more than two months has passed since the match in Merano. All that time the champion has been literally “bombarded” – he has had numerous meetings with chess fans, and he has been unable to rest properly. This told on his play: in a number of games he clearly failed to gain points that had already been earned, and after being close to a win against Palermo he even lost ... Although he still felt tired after the match for the crown, the world champion, in contrast to the overwhelming majority of his predecessors, nevertheless did not deviate from his principle: to participate in strong tournaments planned beforehand.’

There was indeed much to divert Karpov: with the blessing of the highest Party officials, he was ‘elected’ chairman of the Soviet Peace Fund (to the present day he is still the head of this transformed organisation). And at that time, as editor-in-chief of *64*, the champion conducted a correspondence press conference for readers of the magazine, replying to their numerous questions. My attention was drawn to two of his statements.

About his chess credo: ‘I have heard many times how Botvinnik divides chess players into “researchers” and ... those who include me. I will not argue with the esteemed Mikhail Moiseevich – after all, it is not a question of the name – but I firmly believe that my “non-researching activity” is not only liked by the chess world, but also benefits it.

Incidentally, the greatest number of valuable chess inventions by Botvinnik relate to that time when he was playing intensively in competitions. And it is hard to count the losses suffered by chess, during the years of the voluntary “sabbatical” of a grandmaster at the height of his powers.’

About his future opponent and the prospects of the young – Kasparov, Psakhis, Yusupov and Dolmatov: ‘If we add to them the best of those in their thirties, we obtain the names of those who will contest the Candidates matches in the immediate future. And perhaps also participate in a match for the title of world champion ... It is not yet clear whether Korchnoi will be able to recover after his crushing defeat in Merano, but for the moment he is the No.2 player in the world. True, I know a grandmaster who is capable of beating him. I think that if he qualifies for the Candidates matches and meets Korchnoi, he will win. That player is Timman.’

Karpov found it difficult at the tournament in London (April 1982). At the start he missed winning chances in his game with Short, then he made three more draws and only in the 5th round did he gain his first win – over Mestel. Karpov: ‘As the local press wrote, in this game the “Dragon” was overcome with the aid of technique. Continuing the play on words, I would have added that this is quite natural: after all, you can’t take it with your bare hands.’

There then followed three more draws, including one with Timman. Playing White, Karpov was eager to gain revenge for Mar del Plata and this time he gained an obvious advantage in a Sicilian Defence. But after a number of inaccuracies he had, on the contrary, to try and save the game: at the tournament there were evening adjournment sessions, and the game went on for three successive days! But generally speaking, Timman played unevenly in London – as Karpov said, ‘the uneven nature of this talented grandmaster’s performances is surprising, although it is already becoming almost customary.’

In the 9th round the champion finally gained a second win – again in a ‘Dragon’, and over an expert on it, Tony Miles. Even in this variation Karpov sought ways that would enable him to escape from sharp lines and critical theoretical debates into simple technical positions, where what acquired decisive importance was his superiority in positional understanding and his ability to arrange his pieces ‘properly’. This game is one of a series of his ‘Sicilian pianissimos’.

Game 87

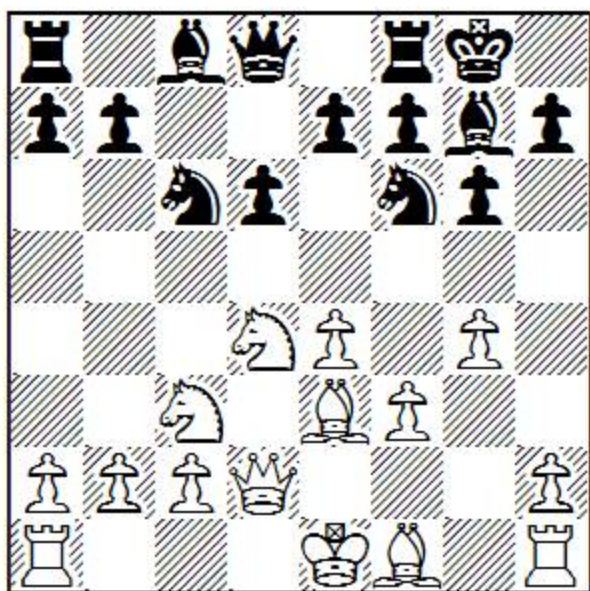
A.Karpov-A.Miles

London 1982, 9th round

Sicilian Defence B76

1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Nf6 5 Nc3 g6 6 Be3 Bg7 7 f3 0-0 8 Qd2 Nc6 9 g4

Karpov's choice can be explained by the fact that in the sharp variations of the Dragon – 9 0-0-0 d5 or 9 Bc4 Bd7 10 0-0-0 Rc8 11 Bb3 Ne5 12 h4 (*Game No.67*) 12 ... h5 – Miles felt very comfortable.

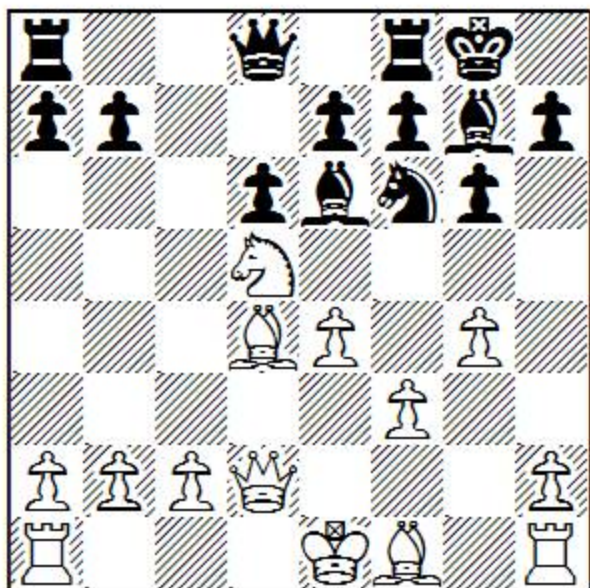


9 ... Be6!

This is deemed best, since it enables Black quite easily to create counterplay. However, occasionally he has also gone in for the semi-correct sacrifice 9 ... Bxg4?! 10 fxg4 Nxg4 or for the voluntary creation of an isolated pawn in the centre: 9 ... e6 10 0-0-0 (after 10 Ndb5?! Black seizes the initiative: 10 ... d5 11 Bc5 a6!? 12 Bxf8 Kxf8 13 exd5 exd5 14 Na3 b5 Kochiev-Miles, Manila 1974) 10 ... d5 11 g5 Nh5 12 h4 (12 f4!?!; 12 Rg1!?) 12 ... Ng3 13 Rg1 Nxf1 14 Rgxf1 Ne5 15 b3 Qa5 16 Kb1 Rd8 17 exd5 exd5 (Dolmatov-Tseshkovsky, Frunze 1983).

In order to understand Miles's decision to play 9 ... Be6, let us look at the 5th round game Karpov-Mestel: 9 ... Nxd4 10 Bxd4 Be6 (in

passing, here is a great rarity – Botvinnik plays the Rauzer Attack: 10 ... Qa5 11 h4 Be6 12 h5 Rfd8? 13 hxg6 hxg6 14 a3 d5 15 e5 Nd7 16 Qh2 Nf8 17 Bd3 with an enormous advantage, Botvinnik-Averbakh, Moscow 1955), and here the champion, who already had experience in this position (11 0-0-0 Qa5 12 Kb1 Rfc8 13 a3 Rab8 – 13 ... Bc4!? – 14 g5 Nh5 15 Nd5 Qxd2 16 Rxd2 Bxd5 17 exd5 Karpov-Dueball, Skopje Olympiad 1972), devised 11 Nd5!? at the board, with the obvious aim of preventing the appearance of the queen at a5.



Analysis diagram

After 11 ... Bxd5 12 exd5 Qc7 (12 ... Qd7!? 13 Bc4 Rfc8 14 Bb3 a5!, and Black's counterattack looks no weaker than White's attack) 13 h4 Rac8 14 Rh2 e5 15 dxe6 fxe6 a double-edged situation arose, in which Karpov, exploiting his opponent's inaccurate play, fairly quickly transposed into a favourable endgame. Apparently Miles wanted to deny White the possibility of 11 Nd5.

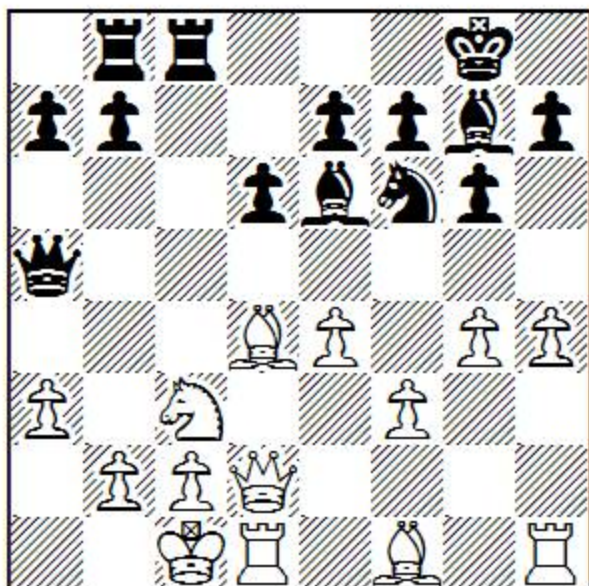
10 0-0-0 Nxd4 11 Bxd4 Qa5 12 a3!

'It is better to make this move immediately, without Kb1.' (Karpov)

12 ... Rab8 13 h4 Rfc8

13 ... b5! (not losing a tempo) is correct, when the invasion of the knight at d5 promises even less than in the game: 14 Nd5 Qxd2+ 15 Rxd2 Bxd5 16 exd5 a5 17 Be2 Nd7 18 Bxg7 Kxg7 19 Re1 Rfc8 20 Bf1 Nc5 (Dolmatov-Alterman, Jelenite 1995), or 14 g5 Nh5 15 Nd5 Qxd2+

16 Rxd2 Bxd5 17 exd5 Ng3 18 Rg1 Bxd4 19 Rxd4 Nxf1 20 Rxf1, in each case with equality.



14 Nd5

Not wishing to engage in attacks on opposite wings, the outcome of which is hard to predict, Karpov again employs his favourite method, creating a pawn outpost at d5, which guarantees him a spatial advantage in a quieter situation: 'The direct attack on the king is not always successful, and therefore I decided to be satisfied with a slight advantage in the forthcoming endgame.' Here it would probably be more correct to talk about a slight initiative.

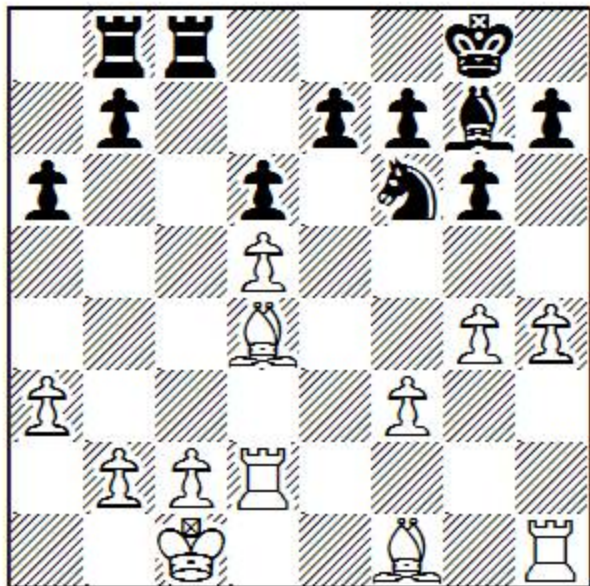
Even so, later experience showed that the opening of the h-file – 14 h5! b5 15 hxg6 followed by 15 ... hxg6 16 Qg5!, 15 ... fxg6 16 g5!, or 15 ... b4 16 Nd5! sets Black significantly more difficult problems.

14 ... Qxd2+ 15 Rxd2 Bxd5

Later the capture with the knight would be deemed safer: 15 ... Nxd5 16 exd5 (if 16 Bxg7, then 16 ... Ne3 equalises) 16 ... Bxd5! 17 Bxg7 Bxf3 18 Rh3 Bxg4 19 Rg3 Kxg7 20 Rxg4 (Dolmatov-Shirov, Klaipeda 1988). This endgame, where Black has three pawns for a bishop, is hard to evaluate. Dvoretzky, who has made a detailed analysis of it, considers the two sides' chances to be roughly equal, only instead of 20 ... f5 he recommends sticking to waiting tactics – for

example, 20 ... Rc7. It is hard for White to exploit the superiority of the bishop in an open position, if Black's pawn structure is not weakened.

16 exd5 a6



17 Be2

White has chances of gaining an advantage, thanks to the two bishops and the possibility of combining play on the kingside with a further bind.

17 ... Nd7

Hoping, if White wants to retain the bishop by 18 Be3, to create counterplay after 18 ... Ne5 19 h5 b5 20 b3 Nd7. However, for the moment Karpov does not intend to avoid the bishop exchange, not wishing to concede the long diagonal.

18 f4 Nc5 19 Rh3 Rc7

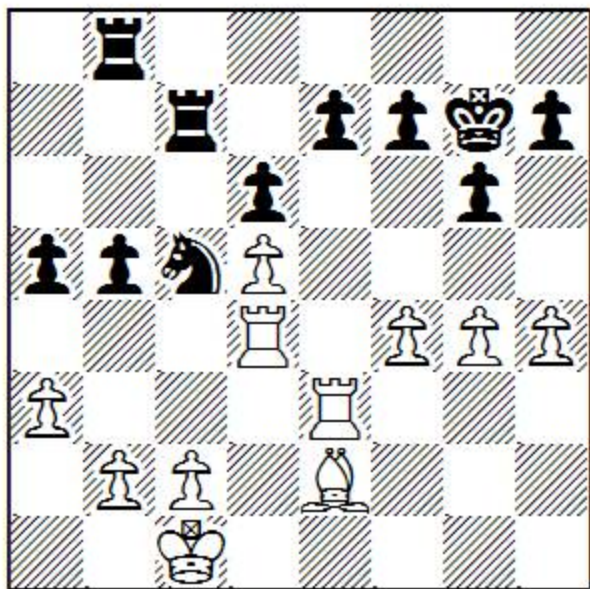
After 19 ... Bxd4 20 Rxd4 the advance 20 ... e5?! is ineffective because of 21 fxe5 dxe5 22 Rd1 (Karpov), but 20 ... b5 21 Re3 Rc7 22 Kd2 Na4 23 b3 Nb6 leads to a roughly equal position, which Miles could have obtained later.

20 Re3 b5 21 Bxg7

White has no right to allow the activation of the black rooks after ... b5-b4, and Karpov makes a prophylactic regrouping, waiting to see what his opponent will do.

21 ... Kxg7 22 Rd4! a5

Knowing the dynamic style of his opponent, the champion was expecting activity of this sort. Had Miles played 22 ... Na4! 23 c3 Nb6 (Karpov), trying to restrict the activity of the enemy pieces by the need to defend the d5-pawn, it would have been unclear how White could claim any advantage.



23 b4!

Immediately emphasising the weakening of the b5-pawn. Polugayevsky: 'If you study the play of Karpov and Fischer in the technical stage of the game, you can see that both of them, when playing White, had a liking for the light-squared bishop. Strangely enough, I consider the person to blame for Karpov growing fond of the light-squared bishop to be myself! In the 4th game of our match, I had a very powerful knight against a useless bishop in an ending, but I contrived to lose this ill-fated game.' (*Game No.54*).

23 ... Na4

Some commentators considered this to be the decisive mistake, but in fact it does not spoil anything, although it was simpler to play 23 ... axb4 24 Rxb4 (Karpov: 'with advantage to White') 24 ... Rcb7: the weakness of the b5-pawn is balanced by the weakness of the d5-pawn, and White's slight spatial advantage is neutralised by the impregnable position of the knight at c5.

24 bxa5! Nc3 25 Bf1 Kf8

It was thought that after 25 ... Ra8 the bold raid of the king was very strong – 26 Kb2 Na4+ 27 Kb3 Nc5+ 28 Kb4 (Karpov). However, there are still quite a number of pieces on the board, and such a raid involves considerable risk. After 28 ... Na6+ 29 Kxb5 Rb7+ the further advance of the king deep into the enemy camp is fraught with problems: 30 Kc6? Nc5! 31 Rxe7 (otherwise mate) 31 ... Rxe7 32 Kxd6 Re4! (stronger than 32 ... Re1 33 Kxc5 Rxf1 34 d6). And in the event of the inglorious retreat – 30 Kc4 Nc5 – Black has no reason for complaint.

26 Rdd3!? (instead of 26 Kb2) is more enterprising, but after 26 ... Na4 (26 ... b4 27 a6! Rc4 28 Rf3) 27 Rb3 Rac8 28 Bd3 Nc5 29 Rxb5 Nxd3+ 30 Rxd3 Rxc2+ 31 Kb1 Rh2 the consequences of the battle in this complicated endgame are not altogether clear.

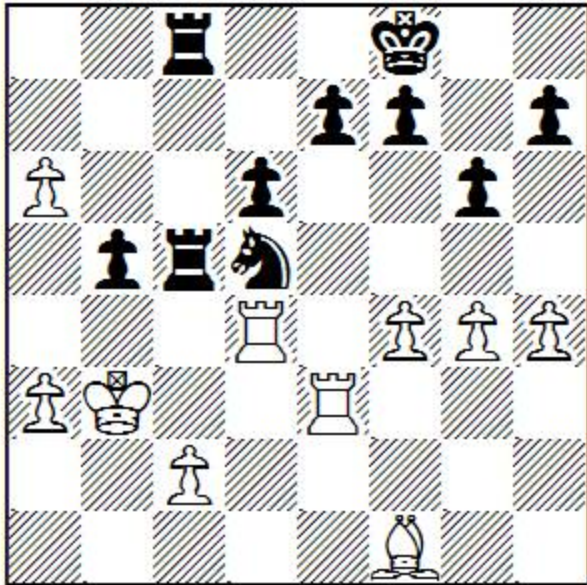
26 Kb2 Rbc8?

But this really is the decisive mistake! After 26 ... Na4+! 27 Kb3 Nc5+ 28 Ka2 Nb7! (not 28 ... Na4 29 Rd2 Karpov) the outcome would have remained hard to predict: 29 a6 (29 Bb5 Rxc2+ 30 Kb1 Rg2) 29 ... Rxc2+ 30 Kb1 Rf2 31 Bxb5 Nc5 32 Rb4 Ra8 33 Re2 Rf3, or 29 c5 Nxa5 30 Rb4 Rc5 31 a4 Ra8! 32 Bxb5 (32 Rxb5 Nc4!) 32 ... Rxd5.

27 Kb3 Rc5

Miles had probably aimed for this position, already thinking about seizing the initiative. It is probable that he only briefly glanced at the exchange sacrifice, overlooking the final insidious move of White's tactical manoeuvre.

28 a6! Nxd5



Otherwise simply a6-a7 and Bh3.

29 Rxd5! Rxd5 30 Rc3!

Splendid! 'A series of fantastic moves!' (Polugayevsky). Now an exchange of rooks is inevitable, and then the a-pawn, which had been left unnoticed, unexpectedly becomes a queen.

30 ... Rd8

After 30 ... Rxc3+ 31 Kxc3 Rc5+ 32 Kb4 Rc7 the simplest is 33 Bg2! (Karpov). 'This is where the power of the bishop displays itself in all its glory!' (Polugayevsky)

31 Rc7!

There was also a simple win by 31 a7 b4 32 axb4 Rd1 33 Ba6 Ra1 34 b5 Ra8 35 Rc7 etc.

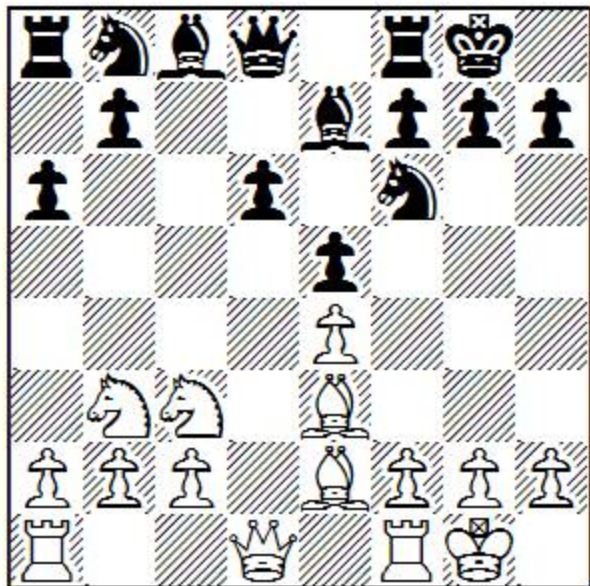
31 ... Rd1 32 Bxb5 e5 33 a7 exf4 34 Rb7 Rb1+ 35 Ka4 Rxb5 36 Rxb5 f3 37 Rb8 f2 38 Rxd8+ 1-0

In the 10th round Karpov continued his 'Sicilian series' with a win over Nunn – and he caught up with the long-time leader Portisch. But then came an 'unparalleled shuffle of the leaders'. The champion lost to the young American, Seirawan (incidentally, one of Korchnoi's seconds), but he retained his composure and in the penultimate round he won 'to order' against Portisch.

In this important encounter there occurred another variety of the 'Sicilian pianissimo' as performed by Karpov – his favourite line against

the Najdorf Variation:

1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Nf6 5 Nc3 a6 6 Be2 e5 7 Nb3 Be7 8 0-0 0-0 (8 ... Be6 – Game Nos.54, 56 and 57) 9 Be3



9 ... Be6!

The game Karpov-Georgadze (Moscow 1983) went 9 ... Qc7, and instead of 10 a4 Be6 11 a5 Nbd7 12 Nd5 (*Volume 2, Game No.98*) White chose 10 Qd2 (also Geller's move) 10 ... Re8!? (earlier 10 ... b5 11 Nd5! or 10 ... Nbd7!? 11 a4 b6 12 Rfd1 Bb7 had been played) 11 a4 b6 12 Bf3 Be6 13 Nc1! (with the idea of Na2-b4-d5) 13 ... Nc6! 14 Nd5! Bxd5 15 exd5 Na5?! (15 ... e4!? Karpov) 16 b3 Rec8 17 Ra2 Nb7 18 Rd1 Nc5 19 Qe1! (preventing ... Ne4) 19 ... Qb7 20 g3 Qd7 21 Bg2 h6? (21 ... Ng4! 22 Bxc5 bxc5! was correct, and if 22 Bd2, then 22 ... f5 or 22 ... b5) 22 a5! b5 23 Bxc5! Rxc5 24 Nd3! Rcc8?! (24 ... Rc7 25 Nb4 Qf5 was more tenacious) 25 Nb4 Re8 26 Nc6 Bf8 27 Qe2 e4?! 28 c4! bxc4 29 Qxc4 Qf5?! 30 Re2 h5 31 Rde1! Qxd5 32 Qxd5 Nxd5 33 Bxe4 Nc7 34 Ne7+! Rxe7 35 Bxa8 Rxe2 36 Rxe2 Nxa8 37 Rc2! 1-0.

Here too Karpov's playing manner is clearly seen: the prophylactic restriction of the opponent's counterplay (16 b3, 19 Qe1, 22 a5), the sudden transformation of one form of advantage into another (23 Bxc5!) and the lightning transference of the knight to c6. All this was performed at the highest level!

10 Qd2 (if 10 a4, then 10 ... Nc6 is good, or else 10 ... Nbd7 11 a5 Rc8! 12 f3 Qc7! 13 Qd2 Rfd8 14 Rfd1 d5! with equality, Geller-Ivkov, Palma de Mallorca Interzonal 1970; Stein-Bronstein, Tallinn 1971) **10 ... Nbd7 11 a4 Rc8**

11 ... Nb6 is also not bad: 12 a5 Nc4 13 Bxc4 Bxc4 14 Rfd1 h6 15 Nc1 Rc8 16 Nd3 Be6 17 Bb6 Qe8 18 f3 Nd7 19 Be3 f5 20 exf5 Rxf5 21 Nb4 Qg6 22 Nbd5 (Karpov-Quinteros, Lucerne Olympiad 1982) 22 ... Bd8! with equality.

12 a5

Following Geller. The play here is of a slow, 'creeping' nature, and the player who wins is the one who understands better the subtleties of the position: making a necessary exchange at the right time, correctly building a pawn chain, and so on. For Karpov's style this was an ideal variation!

12 ... Qc7

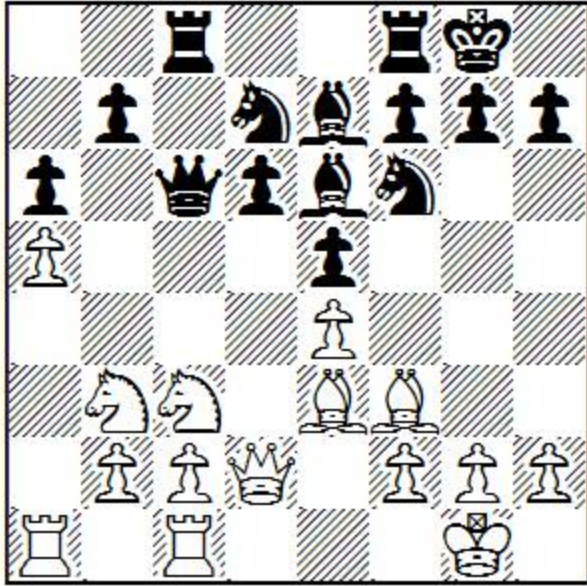
The waiting move 12 ... h6 is also possible (Penrose-Najdorf, Varna Olympiad 1962), or else the modern 12 ... Nc5 13 Nxc5 dxc5 14 Qxd8 Rfxd8 15 f3 c4 (Hracek-Ponomarev, Bled Olympiad 2002; Leko-Topalov, Wijk aan Zee 2004).

13 Rfc1

Preparing Nd5. If 13 Rfd1 Nc5! 14 Nxc5 dxc5, then 15 Nd5 is now ineffective in view of 15 ... Bxd5 16 exd5 Bd6 17 c4 e4 18 g3 Rfe8. Or 15 Bf3 Rfd8 16 Qe1 Rxd1 17 Qxd1 c4! 18 Bb6 Qd6 19 Qe1 Qb4 (Lautier-Gelfand, Tilburg 1996), in each case with equality.

13 ... Qc6 14 Bf3

The critical moment: Nd5 is unavoidable, and the outcome of the opening duel depends on how Black has prepared for it.



14 ... Bc4

Portisch follows the familiar path. It is also possible to play 14 ... Rfe8 15 Nd5 Bxd5 16 exd5 Qc4 17 Qd3 Qh4 18 g3 Qh3 with counterplay, or 14 ... h6 15 Qd1 Nh7 16 Nd2 Ng5! 17 Nd5 Nxf3+ 18 Qxf3 Bd8 19 c4 Kh7 20 b4 f5 with equality (Leko-Bologan, Bled Olympiad 2002).

15 Ra4!

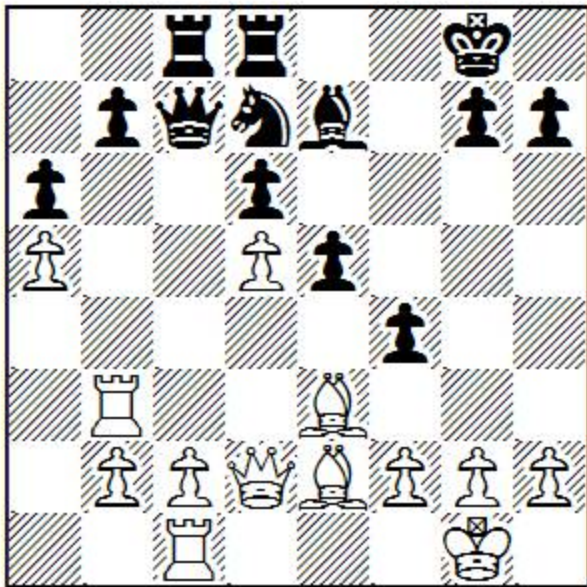
An improvement! In the game Mestel-Browne (Lone Pine 1978) after the insipid 15 Qd1 Rfd8 16 Nd5 Nxd5 17 exd5 Qb5 Black obtained excellent play.

15 ... Rfd8 16 Rb4! (depriving the queen of the b5-square, which strengthens the effect of the knight invasion) **16 ... Qc7 17 Nd5 Nxd5 18 exd5 f5 19 Be2 Bxb3?!**

Portisch falters: 19 ... Bxe2 20 Qxe2 Bf6 was better.

20 Rxb3 f4?

And this is a serious positional mistake 20 ... Bf6! was correct.



21 Bb6! Nxb6 22 Rxb6 Bg5 23 Bg4 Rb8 24 Re1! Qc5 25 Re4! (now Black cannot even manage to exchange queens, and he is condemned to passive waiting) 25 ... Rf8 26 b4 Qc7 27 c4 Kh8 28 c5!, and Black resigned on the 40th move (1-0).

The games with Portisch and Georgadze reflect not only Karpov's style, but also his playing philosophy, which is: to find the set-ups that are most unpleasant for the opponent, enabling him to gain a slight strategic initiative with an absence of real counterplay.

By also defeating Spassky in the last round (with Black in a Ruy Lopez), the world champion worthily concluded the London tournament: 1-2. Andersson and Karpov – 8½ out of 13; 3. Seirawan – 8; 4-7. Ljubojevic, Portisch, Speelman and Timman – 7; 8-9. Miles and Spassky – 6½; 10. Geller – 6, etc.

The next major event was the super-tournament in Bugojno (May 1982), where Karpov had already twice celebrated success, but on this occasion he was not among the contestants. On the other hand, I, the 19-year-old USSR Champion, already among the five strongest players in the world, managed to force my way there. I have already described the difficulties that this entailed in my book *Child of Change*. I will remind you of the main details.

Early in 1982 I received personal invitations from the organisers of three super-tournaments – in London, Bugojno and Turin. My trainer

and I placed our choice on Bugojno. But when I spoke about this to Krogius (Baturinsky's direct successor), the head of the Sports Committee's chess administration, he suggested to me ... a run-of-the-mill tournament in Dortmund, which was four categories lower! To my question as to what this all meant, he replied with disarming directness: 'We have a world champion, and we don't need another one.' And his boss Ivonin let slip in public: 'The Sports Committee is doing everything in its power to prevent Kasparov from meeting Karpov in this cycle.' What was I to do? Making use of a short visit to Baku by Ivonin and the President of the Soviet Chess Federation Sevastyanov, I appealed directly to them and to the Azerbaijan leader Geidar Aliev. And only then was I allowed to play in Bugojno.

The outcome of this event involving the leading grandmasters in the world evoked thoughts about the coming storms at the chess summit: 1. Kasparov – $9\frac{1}{2}$ out of 13 (+6=7); 2-3. Ljubojevic and Polugayevsky – 8; 4-5. Hübner and Spassky – $7\frac{1}{2}$; 6-8. Andersson, Larsen and Petrosian – 7; 9. Ivanovic – 6; 10. Timman – $5\frac{1}{2}$, etc. 'Whereas earlier I thought that Kasparov could become Karpov's opponent no earlier than the next cycle, after Bugojno I am inclined to admit that this may possibly happen earlier,' Botvinnik said in an interview. That autumn I also won the Interzonal tournament in Moscow (+7=6), and at the Olympiad in Lucerne, substituting on board one for Karpov, I defeated Korchnoi in a very sharp struggle.

The champion too was not idle. In June he set off with his trainer Zaitsev to a strong double-round tournament in Turin. The participation of eight top-class grandmasters was planned, but at the last moment Timman withdrew, and after the first cycle, with a score of 'plus one', Hübner too pulled out (although, in the words of Zaitsev, 'he did not give anyone the impression of being seriously ill'). Karpov found it hard to get into his stride: he threw away an advantage against Andersson and unexpectedly lost to Ljubojevic ... In turn, Portisch defeated Ljubojevic and joined the leading group.

In this situation the next duel between Karpov and Portisch was of exceptional importance. Apparently remembering about London, the Hungarian grandmaster avoided 1 ... c5 in favour of the Petroff Defence. Thus the two players began an unusual opening mini-match of three games, played over the course of six months in 1982. Here Karpov again made use of the stock of preparations remaining from his matches for the world crown, which ensured him an enormous

advantage at the board for a long time, even against the leading theoreticians in the world.

Game 88

A.Karpov-L.Portisch

Turin 1982, 6th round

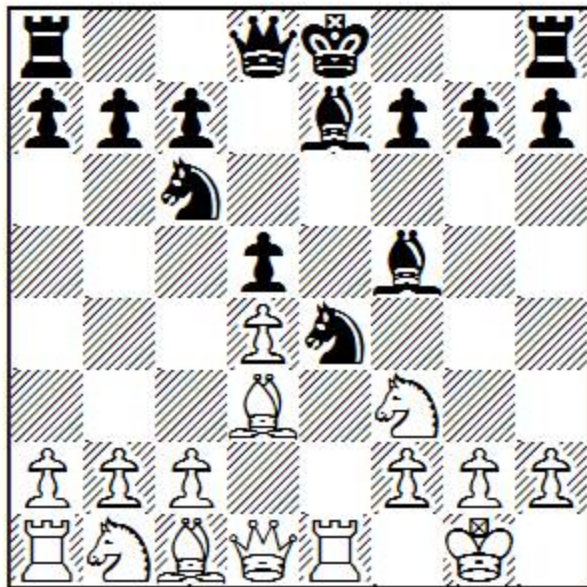
Petroff Defence C42

1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nf6 3 Nxe5 (3 d4 – *Game No. 104*) 3 ... d6 4 Nf3 Nxe4 5 d4 d5 6 Bd3 Be7 7 0-0 Nc6 8 Re1

The modern move order – 8 c4! Nb4 9 Be2 0-0 10 Nc3 Bf5 (or 10 ... Be6) leads to a topical opening *tabiya*, which became especially popular at the turn of the century.

8 ... Bf5

In the end the traditional 8 ... Bg4 was nevertheless deemed more promising, despite the dismal outcome for Black of the game Karpov-Korchnoi (6th matchgame, Moscow 1974).



9 c4!

‘A novelty, which Zaitsev and I had prepared for the match in Merano,’ comments Karpov, ‘but there in the 4th game I played 9 Bb5, being under the influence of the game Timman-Portisch (Moscow

1981). 9 Nbd2 is often played, for example: Kasparov-Karpov (Moscow 1981).'

I should add that the Kavalek-Karpov game from the previous round went 9 a3?! 0-0 10 c4 Bf6 11 Nc3 Nxc3 12 bxc3 Bxd3 13 Qxd3 dxc4 14 Qxc4 Na5 15 Qa4 b6, and Black gained a draw without particular difficulty.

9 ... Nb4 10 Bf1! (of course, not 10 cxd5? Nxf2!) **10 ... 0-0**

10 ... dxc4, as played in the second game of the 'Petroff series', is unsuccessful. After **11 Nc3! Nf6** (11 ... Nxc3? 12 bxc3 Nc2 13 Re5 Nxa1 14 Rxf5 or 12 ... Nd3 13 Bxd3 cxd3 14 Ba3 is bad for Black) **12 Bxc4! 0-0 13 a3 Nc6 14 d5 Na5 15 Ba2 c5 16 Bg5** (16 Ne5 Bd6 17 Qf3 is also strong) **16 ... Re8 17 Qa4 Bd7 18 Qc2 h6 19 Bh4 Nxd5 20 Nxd5 Bxh4 21 Rxe8+ Bxe8** (Karpov-Portisch, Tilburg 1982) there could have followed **22 Nxh4! Qxh4 23 Re1**, when Black's opening experiment ends in disaster.

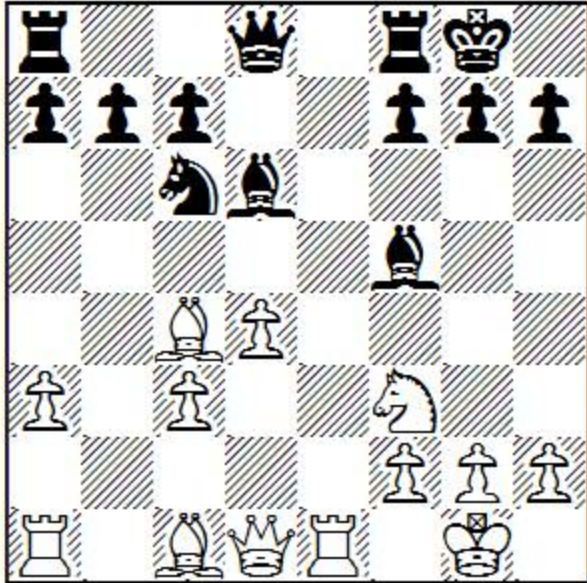
11 a3 Nc6 12 Nc3

In his third game with Portisch (Lucerne Olympiad 1982) Karpov chose the superior continuation **12 cxd5! Qxd5 13 Nc3 Nxc3 14 bxc3 Bg6?!** (allowing White to advance both central pawns; **14 ... Bf6** was better) **15 c4 Qd7** (after **15 ... Qd6 16 d5!** it would now be bad to play **16 ... Bf6? 17 c5! Qd7 18 dxc6 Qxd1 19 Rxd1 Bxa1 20 cxb7 Rab8 21 Bf4**) **16 d5 Bf6 17 Ra2 Na5 18 Bf4** (increasing the pressure; **18 Ne5** was also not bad) **18 ... Rfe8 19 Rae2! Rec8?** (this leads to a debacle, but it is already hard to offer Black any good advice) **20 Ne5 Qf5 21 Bd2! Nxc4 22 g4!**, and White won.

12 ... Nxc3 13 bxc3 dxc4!

For the moment there is nothing for the bishop to do on the long diagonal: **13 ... Bf6 14 Bf4 dxc4 15 Bxc4 Qd7 16 Ba2 Rfe8 17 Qd2 b5 18 Bg5** with unpleasant pressure (Adams-Karpov, Dortmund 1999). Portisch finds a good post for his dark-squared bishop.

14 Bxc4 Bd6!

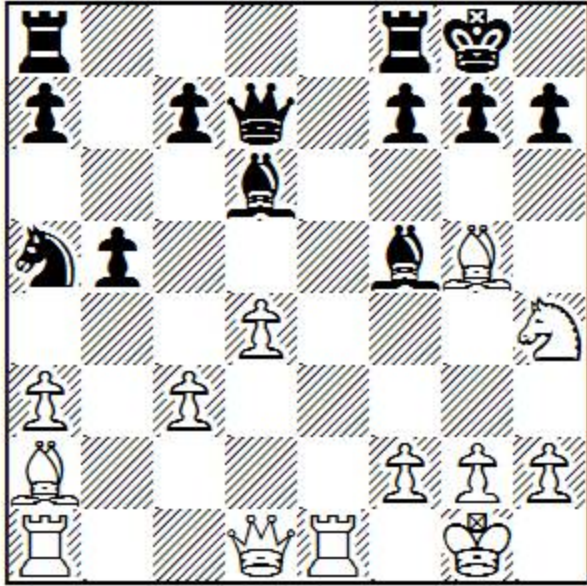


15 Bg5

Nowadays it is considered that White retains the initiative by 15 Ra2! Qd7 16 Ng5, for example: 16 ... Bg6 17 Ne4 Rfe8 18 Rae2 Bxe4 19 Rxe4 Rxe4 20 Rxe4 Re8 21 f3!? Nd8 22 Bb3 c6 23 a4 Ne6 24 g3 (Adams-Anand, 3rd matchgame, New Delhi 2000), or 16 ... Na5 17 Bd3 b5 18 Qf3 Bg6 19 Rae2 (Shirov-Karpov, Prague blitz 2002).

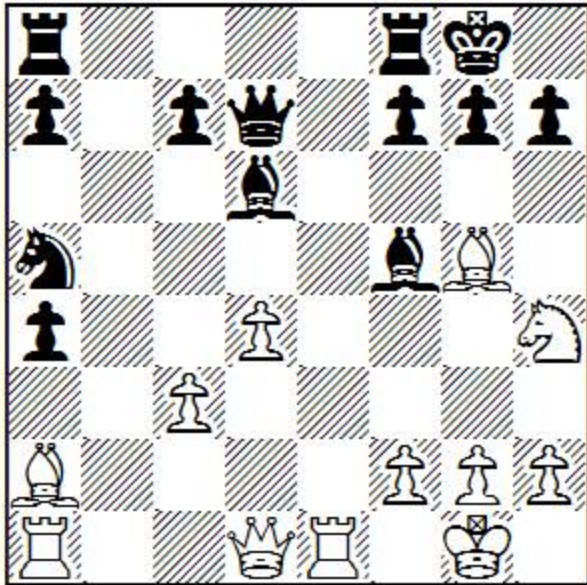
15 ... Qd7 16 Nh4 (securing the advantage of the two bishops, but play in the centre came into consideration – 16 Ne5) 16 ... Na5 17 Ba2 b5!?

Black does not want to saddle himself with a weak pawn by 17 ... Be6 18 Bxe6 fxe6, although it is hard for White to transform his minimal advantage into anything real: 19 Nf3 Rae8 20 Bh4 Qc6 21 Qc2 h6 22 Bg3 Qd5 (Adams-Anand, 1st matchgame, New Delhi 2000). Another possibility is 17 ... Bg4!? 18 Qd3 Rae8 19 h3 Rxe1+ 20 Rxe1 Re8 with equality (Svidler-Adams, 3rd matchgame, New Delhi 2000).



18 a4 a6?

The dynamics of the position are now clearly in White's favour, and Karpov exploits this very skilfully. Portisch was still hoping to establish his knight at c4 and therefore he avoided 18 ... bxa4!, which would have led to a radical change in the pawn structure. But in this way Black could have achieved an equal game!



Analysis diagram

Karpov was intending to play 19 Bd5 Rae8 20 Rxe8 Rxe8 21 Nxf5 Qxf5 22 Qxa4 Rb8 23 Re1 'with the better chances', but 23 ... c6 leads to complete equality: 24 Qxa5 cxd5 25 Qxa7 Rb1 26 Qa8+ Bf8 27 Bd2 Qe4 28 Kf1 Qd3+ 29 Kg1 Qe4. White also has no advantage after 19 Nxf5 Qxf5 20 Be7 Rfe8 21 Bb1 Qd7 22 Bxd6 Nb3!

It remains to consider 19 c4 c5. After the direct 20 dxc5 Bxc5 21 Re5? White can even lose: 21 ... Qxd1+ 22 Rxd1 Bg4! 23 Rdd5 (or 23 Rxc5 Bxd1 24 Rxa5 Rfb8 25 Bc1 Bb3 26 Bb1 Rd8!) 23 ... f6! (Karpov) 24 Rxc5 Nb3 25 Bxb3 axb3. In the position after 20 Nxf5 Qxf5 21 h4 Nb3 22 Bb1 Qd7 23 dxc5 Nxc5 24 Ra2 Karpov sees 'excellent attacking chances', but the threat of 25 Rd2 is easily parried by 24 ... Qc7! Incidentally, apart from 19 ... c5 Black can also play 19 ... Nb3!?, for example: 20 c5 (20 Bxb3 axb3 21 Qxb3 Rfb8) 20 ... h6 21 Nxf5 Qxf5 22 Bxb3 axb3 23 cxd6 Qxg5 24 dxc7 b2 25 Rb1 Rac8 26 Re5 Qf6 27 Qc2 Qd6 28 Rc5 Rfe8 29 g3 Re7 with equality.

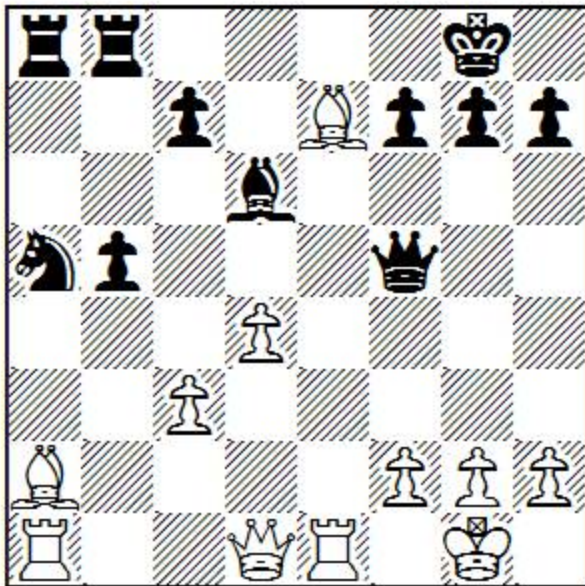
19 axb5 axb5 20 Nxf5 Qxf5 21 Be7 Rfb8?!

It is hard to call this move a mistake, but it certainly aids the development of White's initiative. Other rook moves were also no better. After 21 ... Rfc8? 22 Bb1 Qd7 23 Qf3! g6 24 Ba2 Karpov judged this position to be won, but he is too categorical. The unexpected tactical operation 24 ... Nc4! 25 Bxc4 Qxe7! would have

enabled Black to continue resisting: 26 Bxf7+! Kg7 27 Bd5 Rxa1 28 Rxa1 etc.

Black's problems are not solved by 21 ... Rfe8 22 Bxd6 cxd6 23 Bb1 Qd7 (23 ... Qh5? 24 Rxe8+ Rxe8 25 g4! Qh3 26 Rxa5 Qxc3 27 Rxb5 Re1+ 28 Kg2) 24 Be4! Ra7 (24 ... d5? loses a pawn: 25 Bxd5! Qxd5 26 Rxa5) 25 Bf5 Qc6 26 d5 Rxe1+ 27 Qxe1 Qa8 28 Bd3 g6 29 Qe3 Nc6 30 Rxa7 Nxa7 31 Qd4, and it is hard for his knight to come into play.

The most tenacious was 21 ... Bxe7!? 22 Rxe7 c6 (Karpov) 23 Bb1! Qf6 24 Qe1 g6 25 Bd3. Now Black loses by force after 25 ... Nc4? 26 Rxa8 Rxa8 27 Bxc4 bxc4 28 Re8+ Rxe8 29 Qxe8+ Kg7 30 Qe5, but his defences hold after both 25 ... Nb3 26 Rb1 Ra3 and 25 ... Kg7 26 Rb1 Rab8.



22 g4!

This sharp, but perfectly logical thrust (the queen must be dislodged from f5, where it defends the f7-pawn and prevents the white queen from going to f3) must have shocked the normally imperturbable Hungarian, and he immediately allows an unexpected tactical stroke.

22 ... Qd7?

It was essential to play 22 ... Qf4 23 Bxd6 Qxd6 (23 ... cxd6?! 24 Bd5! Ra7 25 Re4 Qg5 26 Qf3 is bad for Black) 24 Qf3 Qd7! (but not 24 ... Rf8 25 Bxf7+ Kh8 26 Qg3! Qxg3+ 27 hxg3 Rxf7 28 Rxa5 Raf8

29 Rxb5 Rxf2 30 Rf5 R2xf5 31 gxf5). After 25 Bb1! c6 26 Be4 it is hard for Black to disentangle himself, since his knight is forced to remain at a5 to protect the c6-pawn, but it is still possible to defend.

23 Bxf7+! Kh8

The resistance would not have been prolonged for long by 23 ... Kxf7 24 Rxa5! Kg8 (mate follows after 24 ... Bxe7 25 Qf3+ or 24 ... Rxa5 25 Qb3+ Kg6 26 Re6+) 25 Rxa8 Rxa8 26 Qb3+ Kh8 27 Bxd6 cxd6. After 28 Qe6 Qc6 29 d5 Qc8 30 g5 Qd8 31 h4 Black cannot get at the white king, since his heavy pieces have to guard the 8th rank.

24 Bxd6 Qxf7 25 Re7 (conclusively demolishing Black's defences) **25 ... Qf8 26 Bc5**

White prefers to intensify the pressure, not allowing the opponent any chances. There was another way to win – 26 Bxc7 Qxe7 27 Bxb8 Rxb8 28 Rxa5 Qc7 29 Ra3 Rf8 30 Rb3, and Black's hopes of counterplay are illusory: 30 ... Qc4 31 Rb4 Qd5 32 Qe2 Qc6 33 Rxb5 Qxc3 34 Rf5 Rg8 35 d5.

26 ... Qf4 27 Qe2 h6 28 Re4 Qf7 29 Re5 Nc4 30 Rxa8 Rxa8 31 Rf5 Qg6 32 Qe4! Kh7 33 h3 Ra1+ 34 Kg2 Rc1 35 Bb4 Nd6 36 Bxd6 cxd6 37 Qd3 d5 38 f3! 1-0

The pawn march h3-h4-h5 is unavoidable.

In the remaining games Karpov gained quite good revenge against Ljubojevic and made five draws, which sufficed for a share of first place: 1-2. Andersson and Karpov – 6 out of 11 (after deducting the plus against Hübner); 3-4. Ljubojevic and Portisch – 5½; 5. Spassky – 5, etc.

'If it is borne in mind that only six months have passed since the conclusion of the battle in Merano, which took so much strength and energy, the results achieved by the world champion in the last two tournaments should be considered good. That, at any event, is my point of view as a trainer,' Igor Zaitsev wrote in 64.

In July in Las Palmas the first of three Interzonal tournaments was held, bringing success to Ribli and Smyslov, and failure to Petrosian, Timman, Larsen and Psakhis. In August in Toluca, victory was shared by Portisch and Torre, leaving behind Spassky, Polugayevsky, Seirawan, Yusupov and Balashov. In September in Moscow it was Beliavsky and I who distinguished ourselves, ahead of Tal, Andersson and Geller. Together with Korchnoi and Hübner, the finalists from the previous cycle, this made up the eight Candidates, who had to play a series of matches to determine the world champion's next opponent.

In the meantime the champion, finally rested, apparently, after the 'battles in Merano', convincingly won his fourth super-tournament in Tilburg (autumn 1982): 1. Karpov – $7\frac{1}{2}$ out of 11; 2. Timman – 7; 3-4. Andersson and Sosonko – $6\frac{1}{2}$; 5-6. Petrosian and Smyslov – 6, etc. It could have been even better, but after a splendid start – wins over Hübner (the score of their meetings became $+5=8$), Petrosian (for the first time in his life!) and the new Candidate Torre – he unexpectedly miscalculated and lost to Portisch from a practically winning position (cf. *Game No.88*, note to Black's 10th move).

'This strongly affected the final result, since I not only lost a point, but my mood, understandably, was spoiled,' Karpov related in 64. 'As expected, one of my main rivals in the fight for first place was Jan Timman. He is a very distinctive player, who is engaged in constant searchings both in opening theory, and in the middlegame. A strong grandmaster, it cannot be denied. But in the years of qualifying events, strange things happen with him. He apparently cannot cope with the feeling of responsibility, with the stresses that accompany these events, and he is unable to control his nerves. Thus in the last cycle he again performed badly in the Interzonal tournament. There is something unjust about a player performing splendidly for three years, but being unable to prepare for one tournament (or unable to cope with the nervous stress), and being eliminated from the world championship for another three years. Perhaps there is a case for players who have won several major tournaments being given an additional right (or personal invitation) to participate in the Candidates matches?'

The impression is that at that time the world champion was dreaming of meeting Timman in a match, and he greatly regretted that this did not happen. His individual score against one of the best western grandmasters at that time was $+7-3=13$. Later the Dutchman, as though forgetting about the 'nervous stress', played several times in the Candidates matches and twice got through to the final! By the start of the final Karpov-Timman match in 1990 the score had risen to $+16-4=30$. Moreover, the insatiable Karpov won both this match: $6\frac{1}{2}-2\frac{1}{2}$ ($+4=5$) and their next one, for the FIDE world championship (1993): $12\frac{1}{2}-8\frac{1}{2}$ ($+6-2=13$). There is no doubt that Euwe's highly talented successor could have been a real contender for the chess crown, had it not been for the solid wall of Soviet grandmasters headed by the two 'Kas' ...

In November 1982 the Soviet cohort – Karpov, Kasparov, Polugayevsky and Beliavsky, reserves Tal and Yusupov – crushed everyone at the World Olympiad in Lucerne: 1. USSR – 42½ out of 56; 2. Czechoslovakia – 36; 3. USA – 35½, etc. Karpov: ‘The objective was fulfilled surprisingly easily. It is extremely rare for all the players in a team to be simultaneously in good form. We were able to vary our line-up at will.’ In the 14 rounds Karpov played eight games (+5=3) and I played eleven (+6=5).

At that same time, with Soviet support, the organiser of the match in Baguio, Florencio Campomanes, was elected President of FIDE. Before the result of the vote was announced, a highly symbolic episode occurred. In a tragic voice the chairman read out a note that had been handed to him: ‘I regret to inform you of the death of President Brezhnev. I would ask you all to stand and observe a minute’s silence in his memory.’ Immediately after this, in deathly silence, Campomanes’s victory was announced. It appeared that the chess world was mourning not Brezhnev’s departure, but its own future ...

The world champion’s next appearance was the super-tournament in Linares (February 1983): 1. Spassky – 6½ out of 10; 2-3. Andersson and Karpov – 6 (+2=8); 4-6. Miles, Sax and Yusupov – 5½ (ahead of Geller, Hort, Timman, Seirawan and Larsen). Karpov played with great care and restraint, but on one occasion he made a brilliant combination – and won the prize for the best game in the tournament.

Game 89

A.Karpov-G.Sax

Linares 1983

Sicilian Defence B81

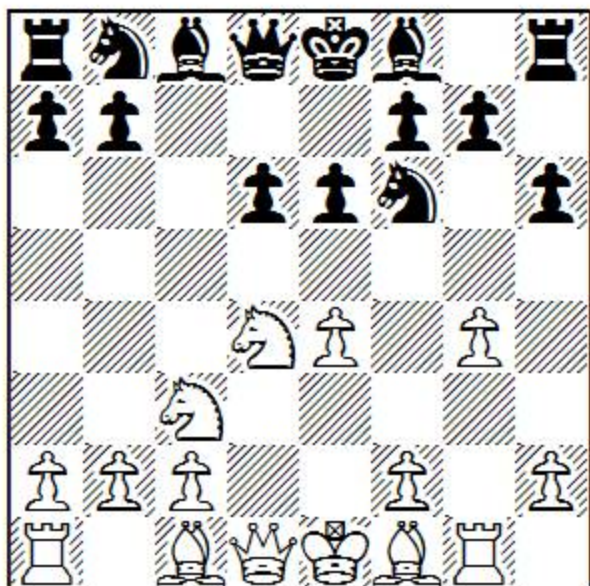
1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Nf6 5 Nc3 e6 6 g4

‘My choice of variation was to some extent determined by the fact that in the first two rounds the Hungarian grandmaster had gained two wins, and in a short tournament this is an important factor. An attempt had to be made to stop him,’ writes Karpov.

As is apparent from the above games with Hort, Dorfman and Spassky, when necessary Karpov would temporarily change his predominantly prophylactic style, although he tried to interpret even the sharp variations of the Keres Attack in a strictly positional manner.

6 ... h6 (6 ... Nc6 – Game No.50; 6 ... Be7 – Game No.71) 7 Rg1

The champion's main move in the early 1980s (7 h4 – *Game No.83*).



7 ... Be7

Not long before this Black successfully tried 7 ... Nc6 8 Be3 g5!? 9 Qd2 Ne5 (9 ... Nd7?! is questionable: 10 0-0-0 Nde5 11 Be2 a6 12 h4 Anand-Sax, Reggio Emilia 1988) 10 Be2 Ng6! 11 0-0-0 a6 ... $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ (Karpov-Spassky, Turin 1982). On this occasion he might have faced 9 h4!? (Zaitsev-A.Sokolov, Moscow 1983).

But the game Karpov-Timman (Plovdiv 1983), played soon afterwards, went 8 ... a6 9 Qe2 (9 h4!?) 9 ... Nxd4 10 Bxd4 e5 11 Be3 Be6 12 h4, and after 12 ... g6!? 13 g5 hxg5 14 hxg5 Nh5 15 0-0-0 Nf4 16 Bxf4 exf4 17 Nd5 Bg7 Black managed to extinguish his opponent's initiative.

8 Be3 (avoiding 8 h4 d5!? 9 exd5 Nxd5 10 Bb5+ Kf8 with sharp play, Radulov-Sax, Vrsac 1975) **8 ... Nc6**

After this game Sax switched to 8 ... a6.

9 Qe2

According to Karpov, the idea of this rather unusual move is that after 0-0-0 White wants to exploit the opposition of his rook and the black queen on the d-file. Earlier he tried 9 Be2, but after 9 ... a6 10 Qd2 Nxd4 11 Qxd4 e5 12 Qd2 Be6 13 Bf3 Nd7 14 Nd5 Bg5 15 0-0-0

Rc8 16 Kb1 Bxd5 17 exd5 Nc5 Black did not have any particular problems (Karpov-Timman, Mar del Plata 1982).

9 ... Bd7

A questionable novelty with the typical idea of ... Nxd4 and ... Bc6. The game Karpov-Andersson (Turin 1982) went 9 ... Nxd4 10 Bxd4 e5 11 Be3 Be6 12 0-0-0 Nd7!? 13 Kb1 a6 14 f4 exf4 15 Bxf4 Bf6! 16 Qe3 Be5 with a comfortable game for Black. Of course, an improvement had been prepared for the game with Sax. For example, 13 Nb5!? Nb6! (Zaitsev) 14 Qd2, and Black still has to find an acceptable defence.

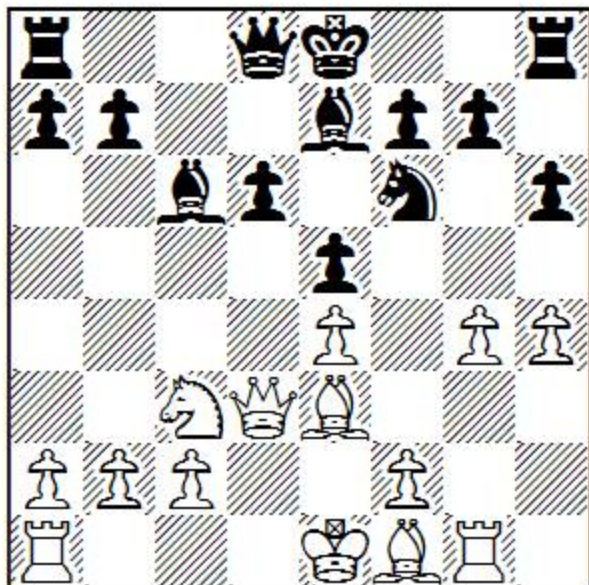
10 h4

After 10 0-0-0 the consequences of the following variation seemed to Karpov to be unclear: 10 ... Nxd4 11 Bxd4 e5 12 Be3 Rc8 with the typical idea of ... Rxc3! 'Therefore in the first instance White sets in readiness the mechanism for driving the knight at f6 (g4-g5) from its important position.'

10 ... Nxd4 11 Bxd4 e5 12 Be3 Bc6 (if 12 ... Rc8, then 13 g5 hxg5 14 hxg5 Ng4 15 Rxg4 Rxc3! 16 Rg3! or, even better, 15 Bd2!) **13 Qd3**

'Defending the e4-pawn and strengthening White's control of the d5-square. 14 g5 is threatened.' (Karpov)

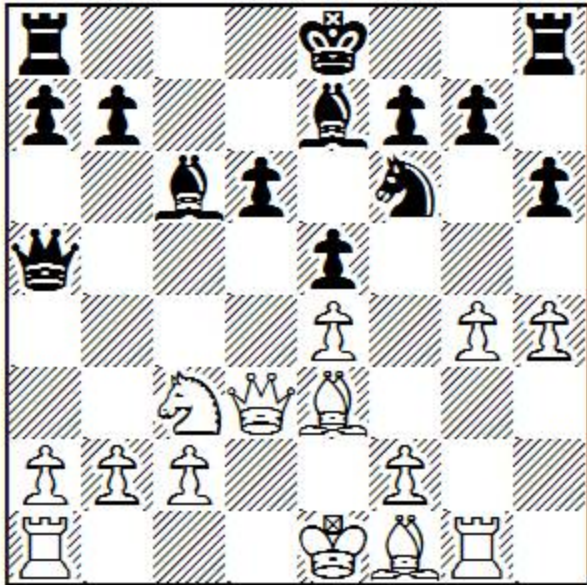
In Dvoretsky's opinion, 13 Qf3!? was stronger (but not 13 f3 Nh7!), for example: 13 ... d5 14 Nxd5! Bxd5! (14 ... Nxd5 or 14 ... Nxe4 is bad because of 15 0-0-0!) 15 exd5 Qxd5 16 Bg2 with a slight advantage for White, or 13 ... Qa5 14 0-0-0 (14 Bd2 Qb4 is unclear) 14 ... Nxe4! 15 Nxe4 Qxa2 (15 ... d5?! 16 Qf5! dxe4 17 Bc4 Rf8 18 Qh7!?) 16 Nc3 Bxf3 (16 ... Qa1+ 17 Kd2 Qxb2 18 Qg3! is dangerous for Black) 17 Nxa2 Bxd1 18 Bb5+! Kf8 19 Rxd1 with somewhat the better ending for White.



13 ... Qa5?

Unfortunately for Sax, he conceived a sharp tactical operation. 13 ... d5?! was dubious: 14 exd5 Nxd5 15 0-0-0! Nxe3 16 Qxe3 Qa5 17 Bb5! 0-0?! (17 ... Bxb5? 18 Qxe5) 18 g5 (Dvoretsky) 18 ... hxg5 19 hxg5 Bxb5 20 Nd5! Rfe8 (20 ... Qd8 21 Qxe5) 21 Nf6+!, or 17 ... a6 18 Bxc6+ (18 Qxe5 axb5 19 Qxg7 Rf8 is not altogether clear) 18 ... bxc6 19 Qf3!? (if immediately 19 g5, then 19 ... hxg5 20 hxg5 Rb8! with the idea of ... Qb6) 19 ... Qb6 (19 ... 0-0 20 g5!) 20 Ne4 Rb8 21 b3, and the difference in the placing of the kings is clearly in White's favour.

But 13 ... Nh7! was much better, with the idea of stifling the opponent's attacking pawn chain: after 14 h5 Bg5! 15 0-0-0 0-0, or 14 0-0-0 Bxh4 15 Nb5 0-0 16 Nxd6 (16 Qxd6 Qa5!) 16 ... Qf6 and ... Rfd8 Black has a solid position. Karpov suggests the gambit 14 g5 hxg5 15 Nd5 'with a slight advantage to White'. Dvoretsky objects: 'The pawn sacrifice is tempting, but it is not clear whether it is correct: 15 ... gxh4 16 Rxg7 Nf6 18 0-0-0 h3.' I would add that also after 15 ... Nf6 it is not at all easy, if at all possible, to demonstrate an advantage for White.



14 0-0-0 Nxe4

It is too late to deviate: if 14 ... 0-0-0? White has the strong 15 Qc4 Nxe4 16 Nd5! Bxh4 17 Qxe4 Qxa2 18 Bc4 (Dvoretsky), or 15 g5! hxg5 16 hxg5 Nxe4 (if 16 ... Nh5(d7), then 17 Qc4!) 17 Nxe4 d5 18 Nd2!, and the knight sacrifice proves incorrect: 18 ... d4 (18 ... g6 19 Kb1 and Nb3) 19 Nb3 Qxa2 20 Qf5+ Rd7 21 Qxe5 dxe3 22 Rxd7 Kxd7 23 Bc4 and wins.

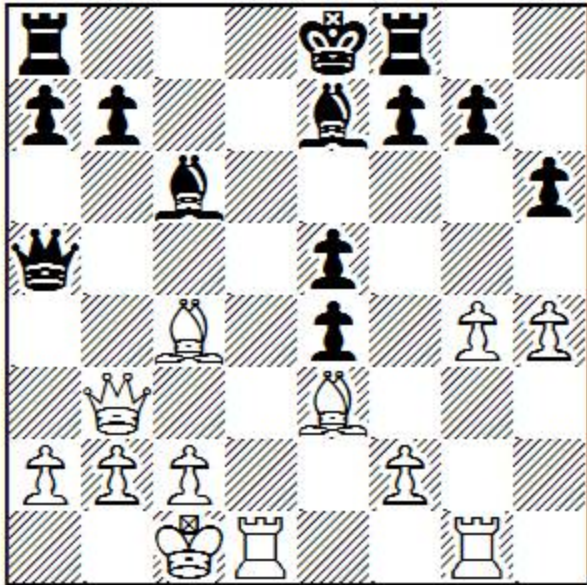
15 Nxe4 d5 16 Qb3

Karpov attaches an exclamation mark to this strong move: 'Now Black is forced to take the knight, after which his king is unable to shelter on either wing and remains dangerously placed in the centre.'

However, an unexpected and pretty idea of grandmaster Bologan was even stronger: 16 Nd2! d4 (16 ... Qxa2 17 Qf5!) 17 Nb3 Qxa2 18 Qf5!! dxe3 19 Bc4 0-0 20 g5 with a winning attack (pointed out by Dvoretsky). For example: 20 ... e2 21 gxh6! exd1Q+ 22 Rxd1 Be4 (22 ... Bf6 23 Rg1) 23 Qxe4 Bf6 24 Rd6.

16 ... dxe4 17 Bc4 Rf8

'The black rook occupies an awkward position, in which it remains to the end of the game. But 17 ... 0-0 was bad due to 18 g5 hxg5 19 Bxg5 with a very strong attack' (Karpov): 19 ... Bxg5+ 20 hxg5 and Qh3!



18 Rd5!?

A spectacular positional exchange sacrifice, although 18 g5! hxg5 19 hxg5 suggests itself, for example: 19 ... Qb4? 20 g6! fxg6 21 Qxb4 Bxb4 22 Rxc6, or 20 ... Qxb3 21 gxf7+ Rxf7 22 axb3, getting through to the g7-pawn. But here Karpov did not like 'Black's only chance – 19 ... g6: it was not clear to me whether I should provoke this move.' The situation is clarified by 20 Rh1!, a move pointed out by grandmaster Motylev: if 20 ... Qb4? White wins immediately by 21 Bxf7+! Rxf7 22 Qe6. Of course, 20 ... Rd8 is essential, but then 21 Rxd8+ Bxd8 22 Rd1! is strong.

Roughly the same happens after the immediate 19 ... Rd8 20 Rxd8+ Bxd8 21 Rd1! (21 c3 Be7! is not so clear – Dvoretsky) 21 ... Be7 22 a3!, when White has total domination: Black's downfall is caused by his 'bad' king. 19 ... Rc8 20 Bd5 Qb4 21 Bxc6+ Rxc6 22 Qd5 Qd6 23 Qxe4 etc. is only slightly better.

18 ... Bxd5 (Black has to take the exchange: if 18 ... Qc7, then 19 Bb5!) 19 Bxd5 Rd8!?

'The natural move, but possibly not the best. After 19 ... Qb4 20 Bxb7 Qxb3 21 axb3 Rb8 the simplest is 22 Bxe4.' (Karpov)

However, Dvoretsky recommends 21 ... Kd7! 22 Rd1+ Ke6! 23 Bd5+ Kf6 with drawing chances, but also a move earlier – 20 Qxb4! Bxb4 21 Bxb7 Rb8 (21 ... Rd8 22 c3(a3) 22 ... Bd6 23 Bxa7) 22 Bc6+

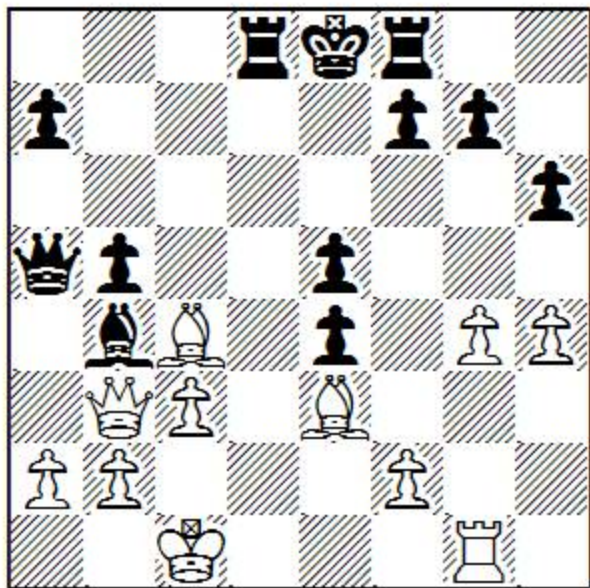
Ke7 23 Bxa7 Ra8 (23 ... Rbc8 24 Bxe4) 24 Bxa8 Rxa8 25 Be3 Rxa2 26 Kb1 with good winning chances, whereas 'after the move in the game the play is more double-edged.'

20 Bc4!

Avoiding the exchange of the dark-squared bishops: 20 Bxe4 Bc5!, while if 20 Bxb7?!, then not only 20 ... Bc5 (Karpov) was possible, but also 20 ... Bxh4! (Dvoretsky).

20 ... Bb4! (not 20 ... Bc5? 21 Bb5+ or 20 ... Bd6? 21 Qxb7 Qc7 22 Qxe4) **21 c3 b5!**

'In the event of 21 ... Bd6 22 Qxb7 Qc7 White could have chosen between an overwhelming endgame – 23 Qxc7 Bxc7 24 Bxa7 and a continuation of the attack – 23 Qxe4. Also 22 g5!? hxg5 23 Rxg5 was very strong.' (Dvoretsky)



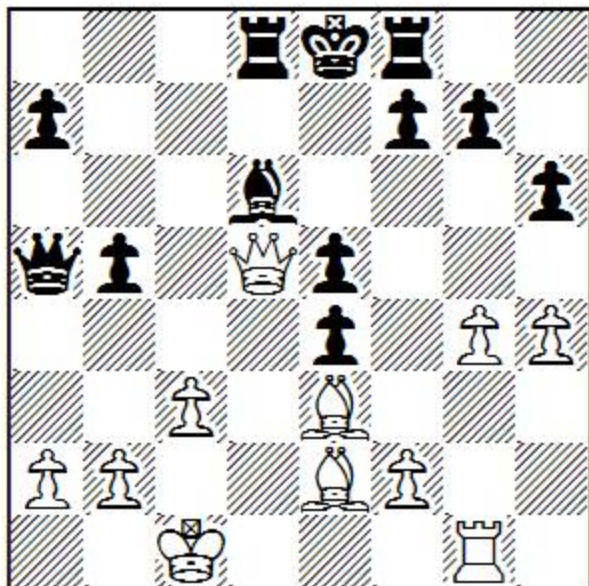
22 Be2!

'Of course, the light-squared bishop has to be retained. The consequences of 22 cxb4 were unclear: 22 ... bxc4 23 Qxc4.' (Karpov). Indeed, after 23 ... Qd5 (Dvoretsky) 24 Qxd5 (24 Qc7 Rd7 with a draw or 24 ... f6!?) 24 ... Rxd5 25 Bxa7 Kd7! it is rather White who would have had to think about how to draw.

22 ... Bd6 23 Qd5!

'There was no point in playing 23 Bxb5+, since after 23 ... Ke7 the black rooks gain scope.' (Karpov). And if 23 g5, then 23 ... b4! was

possible (Dvoretsky).



23 ... Ke7?

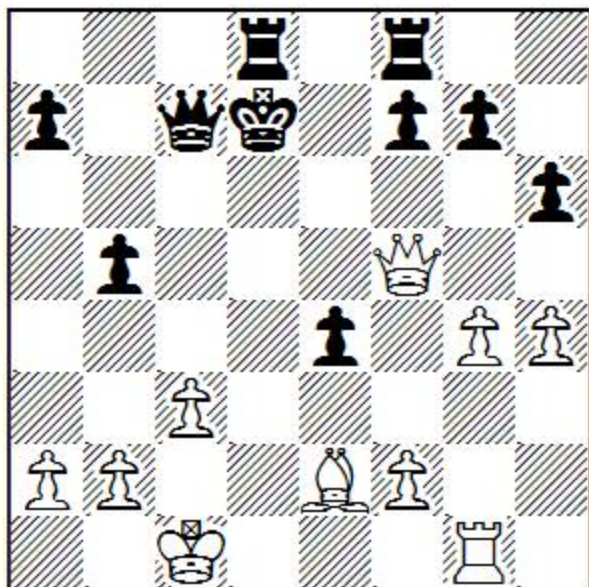
'The critical moment. 23 ... Qxc3+? 24 Kb1! Qxb2+ 25 Kxb2 Ba3+ 26 Kxa3 Rxd5 27 Bxa7 was bad for Black, but better chances of a defence were offered by 23 ... Qc7, after which White would have faced a difficult choice,' writes Karpov, indicating two possibilities: 24 g5, provoking 24 ... Qxc3+?! 25 Kb1, when White gains the c-file, or 24 Bxb5+ Ke7 25 Kc2 – 'a useful prophylactic move', although, according to Dvoretsky, after 25 ... Rb8 26 Rd1 (26 g5 Qb7) 26 ... Rfd8 27 Bc4 Kf8 the outcome is unclear. Therefore, in my view, it is better to play 25 Qxe4 Rb8 26 Bc4 Qb7 27 Qc2! Rfc8 28 Bb3, nevertheless retaining an advantage.

In addition, Dvoretsky recommended 23 ... a6, and 'after 24 Rd1 Qc7 25 Qxe4 White would have retained sufficient compensation for the sacrificed exchange, but evidently not more.' However, 24 Qc6+! is stronger: 24 ... Ke7 25 Rd1 Rd7 (not 25 ... Qc7? 26 Rxd6, 25 ... Qxa2? 26 Bc5 Qe6 27 g5! or 25 ... f6? 26 Kb1! Rd7 27 Bb6 Qa4 28 b3 Qa3 29 Rxd6!) 26 a3 Qd8 (26 ... Rfd8? 27 Bb6 Qa4 28 c4! or 26 ... Rb8? 27 g5! and Bg4 is bad for Black) 27 Qxa6 Qa8 28 Qxb5 Rb8 29 Qd5, and the three connected passed pawns, supported by the bishops, give White winning chances.

24 Bc5! (it would appear that Sax missed this strong move: this bishop exchange is now advantageous to White) 24 ... Bxc5

Black cannot play either 24 ... Qc7 25 Qxe5+ Kd7 26 Bxd6 Qxd6 27 Rd1, or 24 ... f6 25 Bc4! (Karpov).

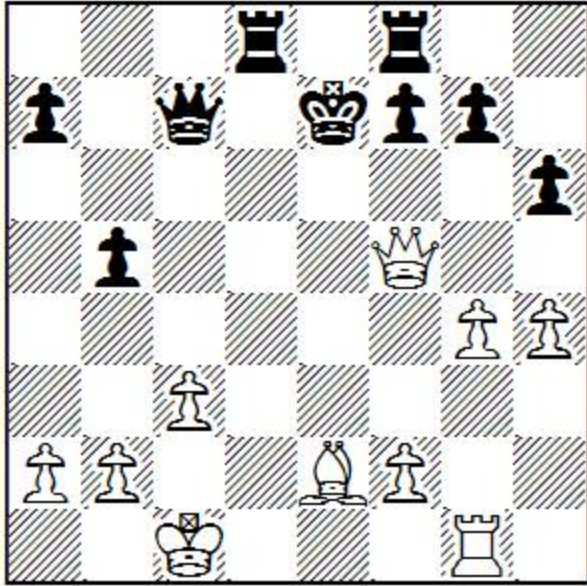
25 Qxe5+ Kd7 26 Qxc5 Qc7 27 Qf5+



27 ... Ke7?

In this game the e7-square was a truly fatal one for Sax! 27 ... Kc6 28 Qxb5+ Kd6 was more tenacious, although 29 Qb4+ favours White after both 29 ... Qc5 30 Qxe4!, and 29 ... Ke5 30 f3! (30 f4+ Kxf4 31 Rf1+ Ke3 is less clear) with a terribly strong attack, for example: 30 ... f5 31 gxf5 Rxf5 32 fxe4 Rf2 33 Qb5+ or 30 ... Qb6 31 Qe7+ Kd5 (31 ... Qe6 32 f4+! Kxf4 33 Qc5 e3 34 Bc4 and wins) 32 Re1! Kc6 33 a4! a6 34 b4 etc.

28 Qxe4+ Kd7 29 Qf5+ Ke7



30 Re1!

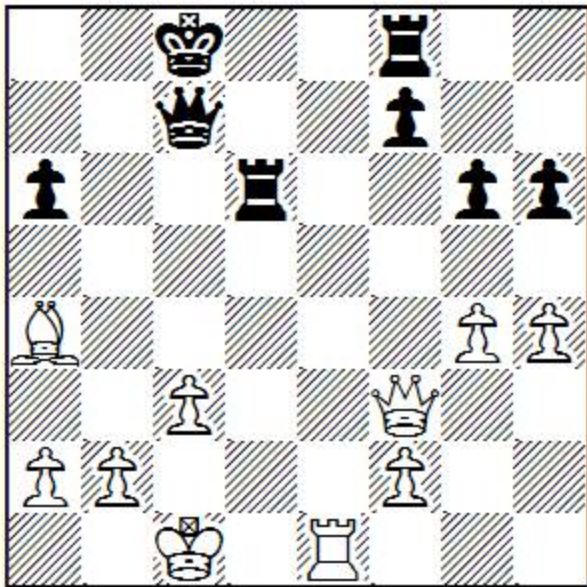
‘After lengthy reflection I managed to find the best way of maintaining the tension, even when the black king hides at d8.’ (Karpov)

30 ... Rd6 31 Bc4+! (not allowing the black rook to go to e6) **31 ... Kd8 32 Bxb5 a6**

32 ... Rf6 33 Qd5+ Rd6 (33 ... Kc8 34 Re7!!, as in the game) **34 Qa8+ Qc8 35 Qxa7** was no better for Black.

33 Ba4! g6 34 Qf3! Kc8

This loses immediately. 34 ... Qc4 would have prolonged the agony, for example: 35 Bb3 Qc6(7) 36 Qf4, or 35 Qa8+ Qc8 36 Qa7 Qc7 37 Qe3 etc.



35 Re7!! (an elegant mating finish) 35 ... Rd1+ (or 35 ... Qxe7 36 Qa8+ Kc7 37 Qa7+) 36 Kxd1 Qxe7 (36 ... Rd8+ 37 Rd7!) 37 Qa8+ Kc7 38 Qa7+ Kd6 39 Qb6+ 1-0

39 ... Ke5 40 Qd4+ Ke6 41 Bb3 is mate.

Then the world champion won the jubilee, 50th USSR Championship (Moscow, April 1983): 1. Karpov – 9½ out of 15 (+5–1=9); 2. Tukmakov – 9; 3-4. Polugayevsky and Vaganian – 8½, etc. I did not take part in this tournament, since I had only just beaten Beliavsky in our quarter-final Candidates match and I was preparing for the semi-final match with Korchnoi.

This, the most important match of the entire cycle, which initially was wrecked by the Sports Committee on the orders of the Communist Party Central Committee and the KGB, as has already been described in some detail in the chapter 'Farewell to the Dream'. Karpov took part in the Moscow negotiations with Campomanes, then invited me to his home, and we discussed the situation in private. He advised me to appeal to Aliiev, then a Politburo member of the Communist Party Central Committee, and for his part he promised to arrange a meeting with Zimyanin, the Secretary of the Central Committee.

Somewhat later, when the FIDE President defaulted me for failing to appear in Pasadena, Karpov made a cautiously vague statement: 'Korchnoi has been awarded a win without playing, but his opponent

failed to turn up for the match not because of his own caprice or illness, but as a result of attendant circumstances, that is, for non-chess reasons.'

It is clear that those who created these circumstances and reasons were pursuing one aim: 'doing everything' to ensure that Kasparov did not qualify to play Karpov. Did the champion himself participate in the intrigue? In his book *Sestra moya Kaissa* (Caissa is my Sister) Anatoly Evgenyevich categorically denies this, maintaining that, on the contrary, he did a great deal to ensure that these matches – mine with Korchnoi and Smyslov's with Ribli – took place:

'I wanted everything to be honest and done with a clear conscience. At that time Kasparov was not yet a serious rival to me. I saw all his weaknesses and I had no doubt that I would cope with him at the chessboard without particular difficulty. This match was even in my interests: the earlier we met, the more crushing would be the score (and the course of the first match showed that this reckoning was correct) ... Wouldn't you agree that this is a simple argument against all Kasparov's fabrications about my villainous plans and actions? ... I even had to fly to the Philippines: we all thought that in the interests of the affair it would do no harm to make use of my good relations with Campomanes. And this reckoning was justified.'

Karpov's reasonable arguments have one flaw: they were put forward after the event, after the fourth of our matches. But then, in the summer of 1983, it was not at all clear on what such optimism by the champion could be based: I was winning all the competitions, one after another, I had already received my first chess 'Oscar' (and soon also the second), my rating was rising rapidly, and by the end of the year it was already higher than Karpov's (the first time it had been exceeded during the entire post-Fischer decade!). And none of his 'good relations with Campomanes' would have helped, if at that historic moment Aliev's political resources had proved inadequate. Not without reason did Smyslov later say to me: 'Young man, if the history of our semi-final matches had occurred not in the summer of 1983, but somewhat earlier (*i.e. before November 1982, when Brezhnev died, and Aliev became a member of the Politburo –G.K.*), we would never have met in the final.'

In August the world champion won a category 9 tournament in Hanover, after suffering a sensational defeat in the first round against the master Hartman (with White in a Keres Attack!) and then scoring

eight wins with six draws: 1. Karpov – 11 out of 15; 2. Georgadze – 10½; 3. Balashov – 10, etc. In September I won the super-tournament in Niksic – 11 out of 14, and in October Karpov in turn celebrated his fifth triumph in Tilburg – 7 out of 11 (+3=8).

By winning my long-suffering match with Korchnoi in December, and the final match against the evergreen Smyslov in April 1984, I gave a conclusive reply to the question that had long been in the air, regarding who would be the world champion's next opponent.

That spring the champion quite confidently won two good tournaments – in Oslo (+3=6) and in London: 1. Karpov – 9 out of 13; 2-3. Chandler and Polugayevsky – 8; 4. Timman – 7½; 5-6. Ribli and Seirawan – 7; 7-8. Korchnoi and Vaganian – 6½, etc. Here 'for old times' sake' he defeated Korchnoi, who after the ending of the boycott again began playing in tournaments against Soviet grandmasters.

In June Karpov and I played in the long-awaited second match between the USSR and the Rest of the World. Our first three boards were known: Karpov, Kasparov and Polugayevsky. But our opponents, endeavouring to improve their result, cunningly changed their board order: Korchnoi was dispatched to torment Polugayevsky, the impregnable Andersson 'manned the goal' against Karpov, and the experienced Timman was thrown against the 'hot-tempered' Kasparov. This plan only partially justified itself: Korchnoi did indeed beat Polugayevsky (+1=3, including a draw with the reserve Tukmakov), but Karpov and I defeated our opponents by the same score. Our team also won: 21-19.

On 10th December 1984 in Moscow the unlimited Karpov-Kasparov match for the world championship began. In the 1st game the opening was ... a Keres Attack! However, here I am forced to interrupt my account, since this will be the topic of Volume 7, which will be devoted to my matches with Karpov.

Super-Final

In July 1985, before our second match, Karpov won a double-round tournament in Amsterdam with 7 out of 10 (+4=6), half a point ahead of Timman. Here he alternated between 1 e4 and 1 Nf3, and in the match with me – between 1 e4 and 1 d4. In the decisive 24th game, in which only a win would satisfy him, the world champion began with his favourite king's pawn, and the very logic of the play in a complicated Sicilian demanded that he should expose his rear by g2-g4-g5. He held

the initiative, but on the 23rd move he delayed, on the 36th move he made a time-trouble blunder – and he lost the match (11-13) and also his title.

After the serious shock of not winning our first match and losing the second, another player would have required a lengthy period of rehabilitation, but Karpov brilliantly displayed his determination by immediately plunging into the thick of tournament battles, in order to attain optimal form for the forthcoming return match in 1986. Already in November he led the USSR team at the World Team Championship in Lucerne (+3=4), in January in Vienna he took part for the first time in 20 years in a 'Swiss', but a strong one (+3=6), in the spring he was easily victorious in Brussels (9 out of 11, 2 points ahead of Korchnoi and $2\frac{1}{2}$ ahead of Miles, Timman and Torre), and early in the summer he won a double-round super-tournament in Bugojno: 1. Karpov – $8\frac{1}{2}$ out of 14; 2-3. Ljubojevic and A.Sokolov – $7\frac{1}{2}$, etc.

In Bugojno Karpov suffered his only defeat over a period of six months – against the new bright star of Soviet chess, Andrey Sokolov (with Black in a Ruy Lopez, Zaitsev Variation). The rapid rise of Sokolov, a contemporary of mine and a pupil of the experienced Moscow trainer Vladimir Yurkov, indicated his enormous chess potential: world junior champion (1982), USSR Champion (1984), one of the winners of the Interzonal tournament in Biel and the Candidates tournament in Montpellier (1985). Early in 1986 in the Candidates semi-final match he crushed Vaganian 6-2, while in the other semi-final Artur Yusupov defeated Timman in excellent style – 6-3.

The unprecedented marathon for the world championship arranged by FIDE (four matches over the course of forty months, the first being of 48 games!) gave rise to a serious problem, which Korchnoi had thought about on the eve of the 32nd game of the match in Baguio: the loser of a return match physically does not have time to take part in the next qualifying cycle. And FIDE found an extraordinary way out of the situation: the winner of the final Candidates match of the new cycle would gain the right to play not with the world champion, but with the loser of the return match, and only the winner of this 'super-final' would qualify for a match with the champion.

In the autumn of 1986, at the same time as I was winning the dramatic return match against Karpov ($12\frac{1}{2}$ - $11\frac{1}{2}$), Sokolov and Yusupov played what was perhaps an even more dramatic final Candidates match: towards the finish Artur was leading 6-4, but then he

lost three games in a row! A draw in the last, 14th game summed up his suffering – 6½-7½. Andrey confirmed his reputation as a ‘person without nerve’.

After this prelude, the Karpov-Sokolov super-final match (Linares, February-March 1987) looked a highly intriguing event and was awaited with great interest. Play was to the best of 14 games. This match is worthy dwelling on in detail, since with it a new stage in Karpov’s career effectively begins.

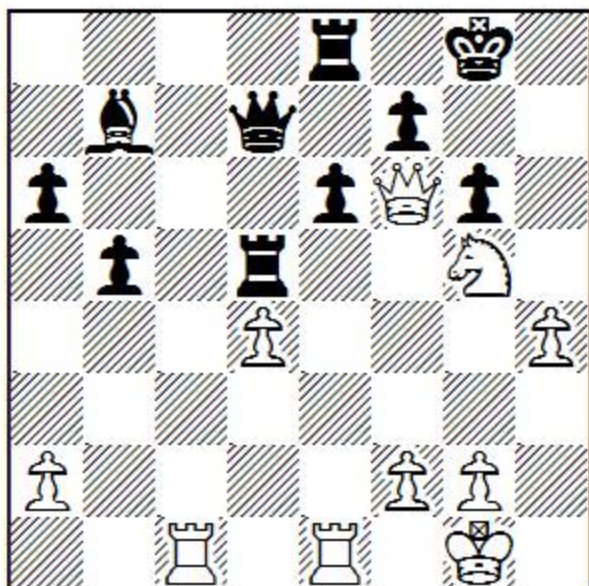
When analysing matches for the world championship, we have seen many times how champions, after losing to younger, rising opponents, began to lose faith in themselves and ceased to be at the forefront of modern chess thinking. But with Karpov, by contrast, his failures in the matches of 1985 and 1986 only added to his motivation! Displaying a rare chess flexibility, he succeeded in completely readjusting and developing for himself a new playing method. Thanks to this, for another ten years the 12th world champion battled at the highest level, won a number of matches for the FIDE championship and gained a brilliant victory in Linares (1994), which is rightly regarded as one of the most outstanding tournament triumphs in the history of chess.

First of all, the results of the 1984-86 matches led to Karpov realising the need to change his opening repertoire. In principle he had already switched to 1 d4 in our return match, but it was the match with Sokolov which showed that his switch was conclusive. Apparently the ex-champion realised that it was too hard for him to maintain control over the situation in the sharp variations of the Sicilian Defence (incidentally, Sokolov, like myself, happily played the ‘Scheveningen’) and that the closed games were nevertheless closer to his tastes and more in keeping with his overall approach to chess.

In addition, Karpov sprung a surprise with Black: starting with this match a solid place in his arsenal was taken by the Caro-Kann Defence with 4 ... Nd7 – a very sound weapon, which he was to use right up to the start of the 21st century (more details about this will be given in the next volume).

In the 1st game after 1 e4 c6 by playing 2 c4 d5 3 exd5 cxd5 4 exd5 Nf6 5 Nc3 Nxd5 6 Nf3 e6 7 d4 Sokolov obtained a position from the Semi-Tarrasch Defence to the Queen’s Gambit: 7 ... Be7 (7 ... Nc6 8 Bd3 Beliavsky-Karpov, Moscow 1986; cf. *Volume 2, Game No.117*) 8 Bc4 0-0 9 0-0 Nc6 10 Re1 (one of Botvinnik’s *tabiyas* – *Volume 2, Game No.36*)

10 ... a6 11 Bb3!? Nxc3 12 bxc3 b5 13 Qd3, and White retained some initiative. The critical moment arose on the 25th move.

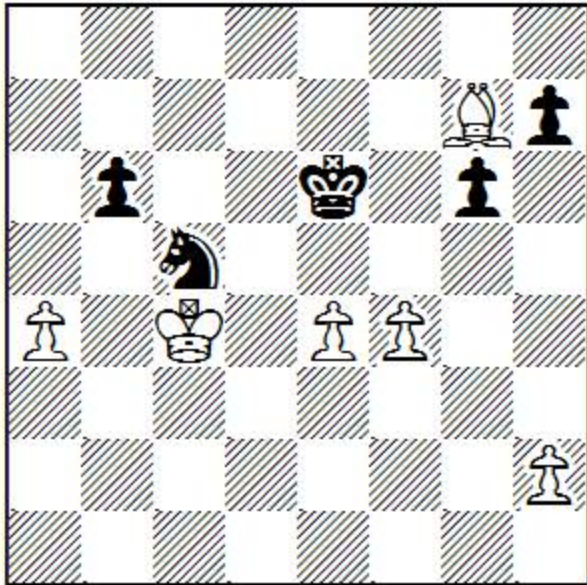


25 Rc5?!

Andrey later regretted that he did not play 25 Ne4! 'with winning chances'. Then Black would have had to find the only move 25 ... Rh5 and after 26 Qxg6! (26 Ng5 Bd5 is unclear, as is 26 d5 Qxd5! 27 Rc5 Qxc5 28 Nxc5 Rxc5, as pointed out by Makarichev) 26 ... fxg6 27 Nf6+ Kg7 28 Nxd7 Rxh4 29 Rc7 Bd5 30 Ne5+ Kg8 31 Nxg6 he would still have had to fight for equality.

25 ... Qe7 26 Rxe6! Qxf6! 27 Rxf6 Rd7, with a draw on the 36th move. Nevertheless, the course of the opening encounter appeared to confirm the opinion of many of the experts, that the match would prove a difficult test for Karpov.

In the 2nd game Karpov chose a topical line of the Queen's Indian Defence with 4 g3 (cf. *Game No.90*, note to White's 19th move), which occurred several times in my matches with him. The game was adjourned in a bishop against knight ending that was slightly better for White. But the defence for Black was rather unpleasant – especially against Karpov! And at the end of the second time control Sokolov faltered.



56 ... Nxe4??

'A draw would have been achieved by 56 ... Nxa4 57 Bd4 Kd6 58 Kb5 (nothing is given by 58 e5+ Ke6 59 h4 h6, intending ... g6-g5) 58 ... Nc5 59 Bxc5+ bxc5 60 h4 h6 61 Kc4 Kc6 62 e5 h5 63 Kd3 Kd7, and Black keeps the distant opposition.' (Makarichev)

57 Kb5 Nc5 58 Bf8!! (after 58 a5 bxa5 59 Kxc5 Kf5 Black succeeds in eliminating the enemy pawns) 58 ... Nd7 (58 ... Nxa4 59 Kxa4 Kf5 60 Bd6) 59 Ba3 Kd5 (59 ... Kf5 60 Bd6) 60 Be7 Kd4 61 Bd8 1-0

Since Sokolov had a narrow opening repertoire, with White playing only 1 e4, after which there invariably followed 1 ... c6, and with Black in reply to 1 d4 choosing only the Queen's Indian Defence, it was in this small field that some interesting theoretical battles ensued: in the eleven games there were six Caro-Kanns and five Queen's Indians!

The next three games ended in draws, and it appeared that Sokolov might still be able to show his worth closer to the end of the match. The 6th game was destined to become decisive.

Game 90

A.Karpov-A.Sokolov

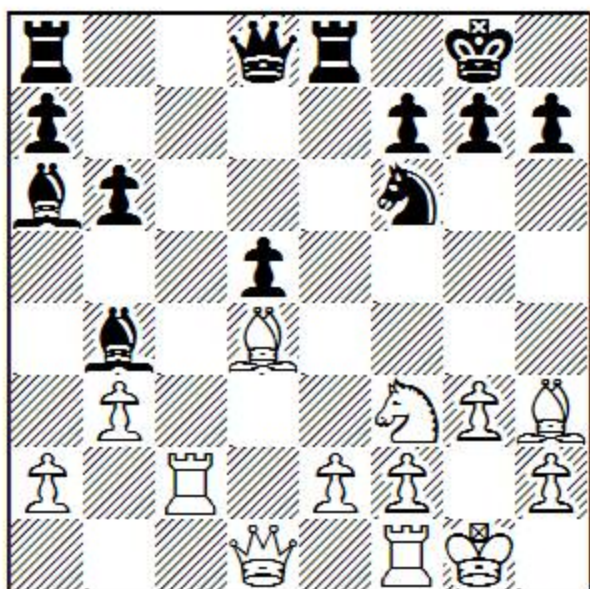
Candidates Match, Linares 1987, 6th game

Queen's Indian Defence E15

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e6 3 Nf3 b6 4 g3 Ba6 5 b3 Bb4+ 6 Bd2 Be7 7 Nc3 (7 Bg2 – *Game No.98*) 7 ... d5 (7 ... 0-0 – *Game No.91*) 8 cxd5 Nxd5 9 Nxd5 exd5 10 Bg2 Nd7 11 0-0 0-0 12 Rc1 Re8

12 ... c5 would have allowed White an additional possibility – 13 dxc5 bxc5 14 Ne1 Nb6 15 a4 Rc8 16 a5 $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ (Kasparov-Karpov, 14th matchgame, Moscow 1984/85). And although experience has shown that the knight manoeuvre to d3 is not especially dangerous for Black, 12 ... Re8 denies White this choice (13 Ne1? Ba3).

13 Re1 c5 (following the 2nd game; the 4th went 13 ... Bd6, and White held some initiative) 14 Be3 Bb7 15 Bh3 cxd4 16 Bxd4 Nf6 17 Rc2 Bb4 18 Rf1 Ba6



19 Nh4!?

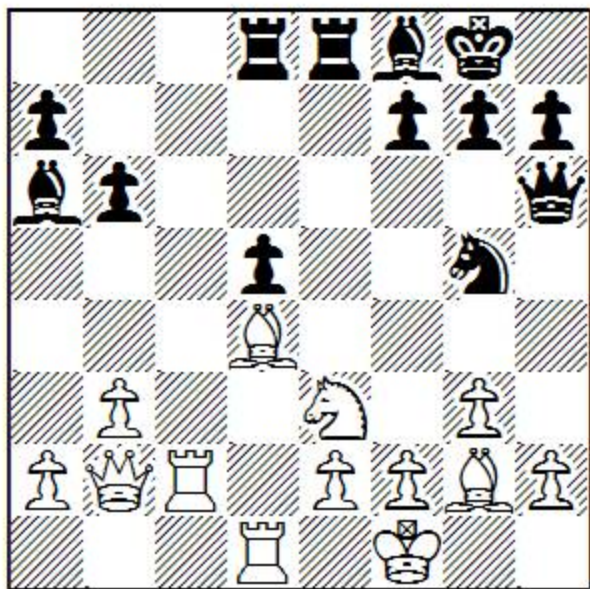
In the 2nd game Karpov decided to immediately vacate the d4-square for his knight – 19 Bb2. Instead of 19 ... Bf8 Sokolov could have chosen the more active 19 ... Bc5 (19 ... Ne4 is also good, since 20 Bxg7 is not dangerous on account of 20 ... Kxg7 21 Qd4+ Nf6 22 Qxb4 Bxe2, winning the exchange) 20 a3 Qe7 21 Nd4 (21 b4?! Qxe2!) 21 ... Bc8!

Karpov intends Nf5, which is associated not only with a potential threat to the g7-point, but also with the manoeuvre of the knight to e3 for an attack on the d5-pawn (lo and behold, the bishop will return to g2 with the same aim).

19 ... Bf8 20 Nf5 Ne4 21 Ne3

By creating pressure on the isolated pawn, White maintains the position in a state of dynamic balance. After 21 Bb2 Bc8 22 Qd4 f6 or 21 Qc1 Ng5! 22 Bg4 h5! the initiative would have passed to Black.

21 ... Qd6 22 Qc1 Rad8 23 Rd1 (White has carried out the intended regrouping ...) 23 ... Qh6 24 Bg2 Ng5 25 Qb2 Nh3+ 26 Kf1 Ng5



But the opponent's counterplay does not allow him to 'work on' the isolated pawn.

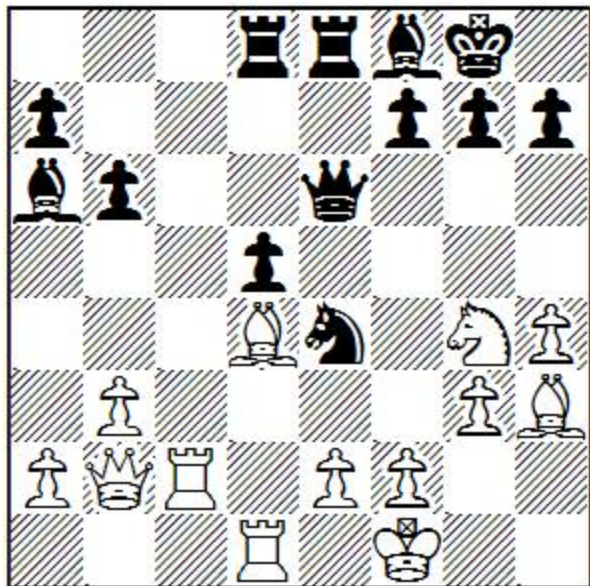
27 Kg1

Here Karpov had a difficult task to solve. For example, the attack 27 Nf5 Qxh2 28 Bxg7 is parried by 28 ... d4! This breakthrough sets White unpleasant problems. After 29 Nh6+ Kxg7 30 Ng4 there is the brilliant stroke 30 ... Rxe2! (Zaitsev looked at 30 ... Qh5 31 Rxd4 Ba3 32 Qa1 when White wins; he also mentioned 30 ... Rxe2, but didn't notice Black's next move) 31 Rxe2 Ba3! – a refinement by the computer, forcing White to think about how to save the game (32 Qc2 Qh5 33 Qf5 Qg6).

27 ... Nh3+ 28 Kf1 Ng5 29 h4!?

Realising that, in a long match, a score of +1 did not yet guarantee him anything, Karpov decided to sharpen the play. This move weakens the king, but analysis shows that the risk was not very great and that the ex-champion's evaluation was correct, although he had to endure some anxious moments when Sokolov launched an attack.

29 ... Ne4 30 Ng4 Qe6 (the prelude to some stormy events; however, 30 ... Qg6!? 31 Ne5 Qf5 would have maintained the considerable tension without any dangerous adventures) 31 Bh3



31 ... Ba3!?

31 ... Qg6 looks less committing, although after 32 Ne5 all the same a piece has to be sacrificed, if Black does not want to come under pressure (32 ... Qf6 33 Nd3 Qh6 34 Qc1). So, 32 ... Nxg3+!? 33 fxc3 Qxc3. Now in the event of 34 Qc3 Qh2 35 Bg2 Rc8 36 Qf3 he has a choice between a spectacular draw: 36 ... Rxc2 37 Qxf7+ Kh8 38 Qg8+! with perpetual check, and 36 ... Rxe5 37 Bxe5 Qxe5 38 Rxc8 Bxc8 – White picks up the d5-pawn, but Black has excellent compensation for the exchange. The immediate 34 Bg2! is better for White, and after 34 ... Qxh4 Black has three pawns for a knight – it is hard to give a more definite evaluation.

It is clear that Black's attack was dangerous, although the wealth of tempting possibilities harboured the risk of him making the incorrect choice, as in fact happened. 31 ... Ba3 is a very spectacular move, but at the end of the combinative storm White gained a slight advantage in the endgame.

32 Qxa3 Bxe2+!

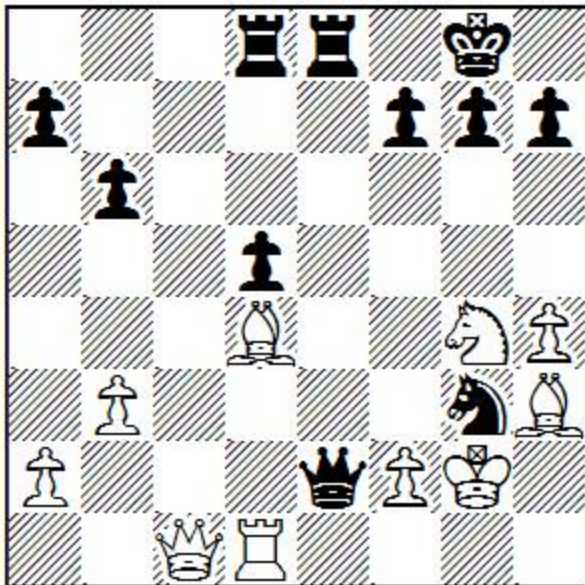
32 ... Nxg3+? loses to 33 Kg2! Qe4+ 34 Kxg3 Qxc2 35 Nh6+ gxh6 36 Rg1.

33 Rxe2

33 Kxe2 Nc3++ 34 Kd3 Qe4+ 35 Kxc3 Rc8+ 36 Bc5 Rxc5+ 37 Qxc5 bxc5 38 Kb2 d4 39 Rcd2 was interesting. In the resulting unusual position White has a material advantage, but his pieces are not coordinated, and therefore Black should manage to create adequate counterplay after, say, 39 ... a5. Karpov chose a clearer path.

33 ... Nxe3+ 34 Kg2 Qxe2 35 Qc1!

This excellent move was most probably underestimated by Sokolov. The queen not only defends the rook, but also eyes the kingside. Moreover, the black knight is forced to retreat to h5, because the leap into the centre 35 ... Ne4 runs into the dagger-blows 36 Nh6+! gxh6 37 Qxh6 f6 38 Rg1!



35 ... Nh5 36 Kh2!

The commentators considered 36 Qg5 Qxd1 37 Nh6+ Kf8 38 Bb2 g6 39 Ba3+ Kg7 40 Be7, concluding their evidence of a decisive advantage for Black with the move found by Polugayevsky, 40 ... Qa1!, which, like the entire preceding chain, the computer 'finds' instantly: 41 Nf5+ Kh8 42 Bxd8 f6! 43 Qg4 Qe5. To complete the picture, it should be mentioned that 37 Nf6+ Kh8 38 Qxh5 Qxh5 39 Nxh5 f6 40 Ng3 Kg8 41 h5 Kf7 leads to a position where, with an unusual balance of forces, the advantage is also with Black.

36 ... Rd6

Black has to defend the 6th rank, since 36 ... f6 loses by force: 37 Nh6+! gxh6 38 Rg1+ Kh8 39 Qxh6 Re5 40 Rg3! Rg8 41 Bg4!

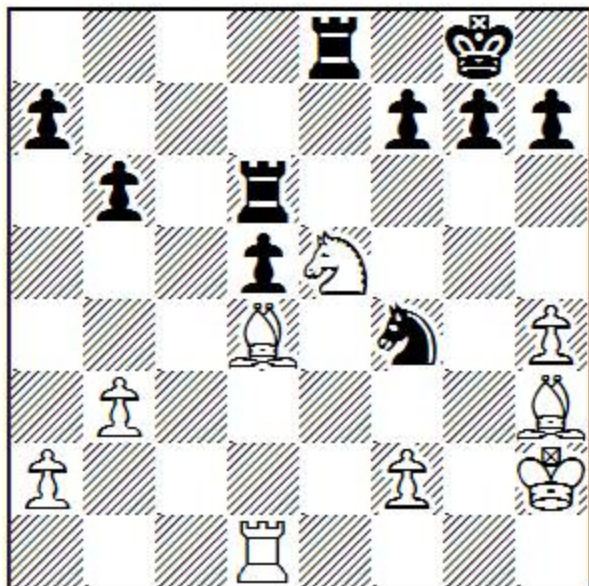
37 Qd2

The exchange of queens is imminent, and the balance of forces is again unusual, White's rook and two bishops being better than Black's two rooks and two pawns.

37 ... Qf3

37 ... f6? again loses to 38 Nh6+! Kf8 39 Bb2!, while the position after 37 ... h6 38 Qxe2 Rxe2 39 a4 does not greatly differ from that reached in the game. 'Forceful' attempts to demonstrate the opposite – 39 ... Re4 40 Ne3 g6 41 Bg4 f5 42 Bf3 Rxh4+ 43 Kg1 – may lead merely to increased difficulties for Black.

38 Ne5 Qf4+ 39 Qxf4 Nxf4



With the exchange of queens, the tension of the struggle diminishes sharply and a stage of unhurried manoeuvring begins. Karpov is very skilful in such positions, and here too he seeks the slightest chances. For a long time, as in the 2nd game, Sokolov demonstrates tenacity and caution.

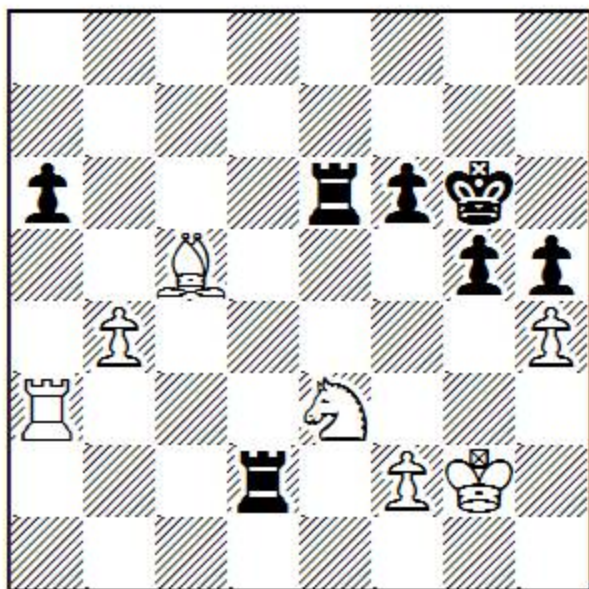
40 Bd7 Rd8 41 Bb5 Ne6 42 Bb2 a6 43 Bf1 Rc8 44 Rd2 d4 45 Bg2 Nf4 46 Bf3 d3 47 Nc4 Rh6 48 Kg3 Ne2+ 49 Bxe2 dxe2 50 Rxe2 b5 51 Ne3 Re6 52 Rd2 h5 53 Kf4 Rc7 54 Rd5 f6 55 Ba3

55 Rxh5 is hardly advisable – after 55 ... Rd6 Black becomes active and regains the pawn. By playing his bishop to c5, on the contrary, Karpov restricts the activity of the black rooks, and then, after supporting his bishop by 57 b4, begins play on the queenside with the unexpected manoeuvre of his rook from d5 to a1.

55 ... g6 56 Bc5 Kf7 57 b4 Ke8 58 Rd1! Rd7 59 Ra1! Rd2

White achieves the creation of a weakness at a6, but in return Black succeeds in activating his rook.

60 Kf3 Kf7 61 a4 bxa4 62 Rxa4 g5 63 Ra3 Kg6 64 Kg2



64 ... gxh4?!

Losing patience, Sokolov makes a step towards disaster. He thought that there were no particular dangers, and with this capture (transforming Black's pawn chain into a ruin) he decided simply to reduce the number of white pawns, relying on the hypothetical possibility of another exchange after ... a6-a5. For a time, a nominal but, alas, unreal equilibrium is established on the board. In the given situation the rook and two minor pieces protected by pawns prove stronger than the two rooks and weak pawns, which need to be constantly guarded.

65 Nf1 Rc2 66 Nh2 Rc4 67 Nf3 Kf7 68 Kh2

The seemingly more vigorous 68 Nd4 Re5 69 Nc6 could have led almost by force – 69 ... Rg5+ 70 Kh2 Rgxc5! 71 bxc5 Rxc5 72 Rxa6

Rc2 73 Kg1 h3 74 f4 h2+ 75 Kh1 Rf2 – to a position where White, playing without his king, would be unlikely to be able to save his only pawn. For example: 76 Ra4 h4 77 Na7 Kg6 78 Nb5 Kf5 79 Nd6+ Kg4 80 f5+ Kh3 81 Ra1 Kg4 82 Rd1 Kf4 83 Rd5 Re2.

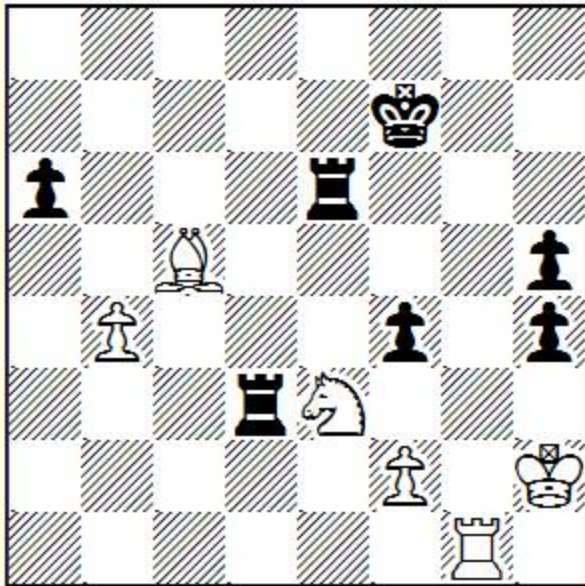
68 ... Rf4 69 Kg2 Ree4?!

It is strange that Sokolov does not repeat the position (perhaps in order to avoid 70 Nd4?). He could hardly have been hoping that this trap would work: 70 Rxa6?? h3+ 71 Kg3 h4+. Karpov does not hurry and continues manoeuvring.

70 Nd2 Re6 71 Nf1! Rg4+ 72 Kh3 Rf4 73 Ra2 Rf3+ 74 Kg2 Rd3

If the rook is kept on the 4th rank – 74 ... Rf4, then after 75 Ne3 f5 76 Nd5 Rg6+ 77 Kh2 Rfg4 78 Ra1! Rg2+ 79 Kh1 R2g5 80 Nc7 the a6-pawn is lost.

75 Ne3 Kg6 76 Ra1 f5?! (this advance merely makes the pawn more vulnerable) 77 Kh2 f4 78 Rg1+ Kf7



79 Ng2!

Beginning the gathering of the harvest. Exploiting the fact that the bishop at c5 is defending the f2-pawn, White wins one of the pawns.

79 ... Rc6

Black could have tried to confuse matters by 79 ... Rf6 80 Nxh4 Ke6, intending to attack the bishop with ... Kd5 and to try and eliminate the queenside pawns (... a6-a5). But White wins by both 81 Rg8 Kd5

82 Rg5+ Kc4 83 Rxh5 Rd5 84 Rh7 a5 85 Rc7 Ra6 86 Bf8+ Kd3 87 bxa5 Rdx5 88 Kh3, and 81 Ng6 Rd5 82 Re1+ Kf7 83 Ne5+ Kg7 84 Nc4 Kh6 85 Nb6 Rg5 86 Nd7 Rff5 87 Ra1 Rg6 88 Nb8, when the a6-pawn cannot be saved.

80 Nxf4 Rf3 81 Nh3

The remainder can now be considered a matter of technique: Black does not gain any counterplay, and his weak h-pawns are doomed.

81 ... Kf6 82 Re1 Rf5 83 Re4 a5

Sokolov has nevertheless succeeded in exchanging the queenside pawns. But White's sole remaining pawn is quite sufficient for victory.

84 Be3! axb4 85 Rxb4 Ra6 86 Rxh4 Raa5 87 Rc4 Rfb5 88 Kg3 Ra8 89 Kh4 Rg8 90 Bg5+ 1-0

Of course, Sokolov could have played on, but he realised that it would be a futile waste of time. The match score became 4-2.

Zaitsev: 'Sometimes the slightest indicators enable you to establish a person's mental state. Top-class chess is not without its great anxiety, sufferings and perhaps even shocks. When on the staircase I bumped into Andrey, returning together with his trainer from the adjournment session of the 6th game, I thought how basically tragic sport can be. And yet Sokolov is one of the few who can endure a defeat comparatively easily.'

To all appearances, this game determined the outcome of the match. It is not easy to recover from such a blow of fate: you appear to be doing everything correctly, you give your all, but the opponent coolly demonstrates that all your efforts are in vain ... Andrey nevertheless displayed courage, and the following three games were drawn after a tough fight.

But in the 10th game, where a complicated ending arose, he again fell under the inexorable Karpov 'steam-roller'.

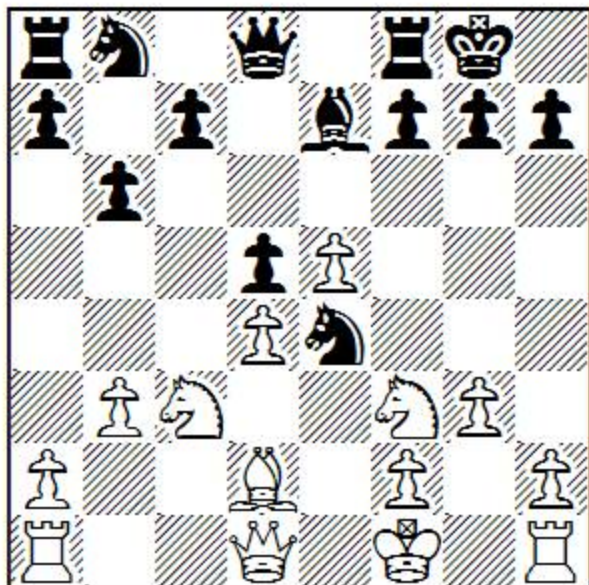
Game 91

A.Karpov-A.Sokolov

Candidates Match, Linares 1987, 10th game

Queen's Indian Defence E15

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e6 3 Nf3 b6 4 g3 Ba6 5 b3 Bb4+ 6 Bd2 Be7 7 Nc3 (7 Bg2 – Game No.98) 7 ... 0-0 (7 ... d5 – Game No.90) 8 e4 d5 9 cxd5 Bxf1 10 Kxf1 exd5 11 e5 Ne4



12 Qe2

The 8th game went 12 Rc1 c5! 13 Kg2 Nc6 14 Re1 Nxc3 15 Bxc3 Qd7 16 Qd3 Rac8 17 Bd2 h6 with equality.

12 ... Nxc3 13 Bxc3 Qd7 14 Kg2 Nc6

Not bad, but subsequently they came to prefer the immediate 14 ... c5 15 Rhe1 Qe6 16 Ng1 (Karpov's idea, which became popular after this game) 16 ... Nc6 17 dxc5 d4 18 Bd2 Bxc5, when the passed d-pawn gives Black splendid play. This occurred in the game Agdestein-Karpov (2nd matchgame, Görvik 1991), in which Black employed the most correct move order and after 19 Qe4 Rfe8 20 f4 Rad8 21 Nf3 d3 22 Ng5 Qd5 he was excellently placed.

The point of the move chosen by Sokolov is to transfer the knight to an ideal blockading post at e6. Then Black will play ... c7-c5 in a more favourable situation. However, Karpov discloses certain defects in this plan with a subtle manoeuvre.

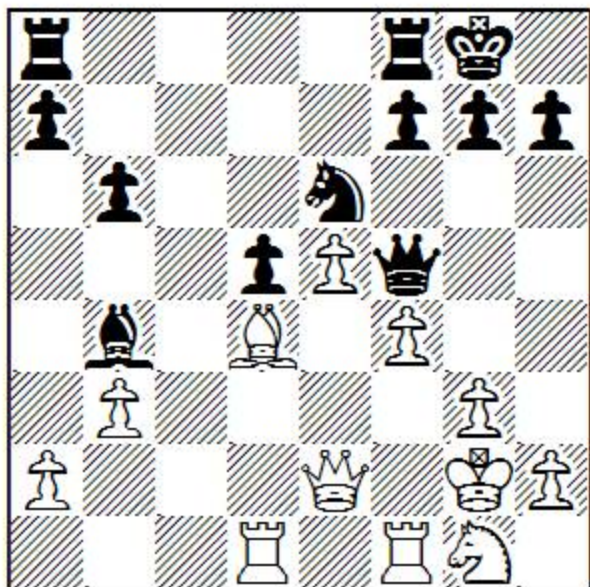
15 Rhe1 Nd8 16 Ng1! (planning f2-f4, which emphasises the instability of the knight's position at e6) **16 ... c5**

This way is not without some strategic risk. White's offensive could have been neutralised by 16 ... Ne6 17 f4 g6 18 Nf3 Rae8, preparing the blockading ... f7-f5 with a perfectly acceptable game.

17 f4 cxd4 18 Bxd4

Black has acquired a passed pawn, but it needs defending. Therefore he faces a struggle for equality. To some extent the scenario of this game resembles the 2nd and 6th games, where initially Sokolov defended well and created counter-chances, but then the tension got to him and he went wrong, which Karpov skilfully exploited.

18 ... Qf5 19 Rad1 Bb4 20 Rf1 Ne6



21 Qd3! Qxd3

Black was short of one tempo (... g7-g6) for setting up a blockade on the light squares. Now it would be too risky to play 21 ... g6 22 Qxf5 gxf5, since the defects in his pawn structure would only promise problems.

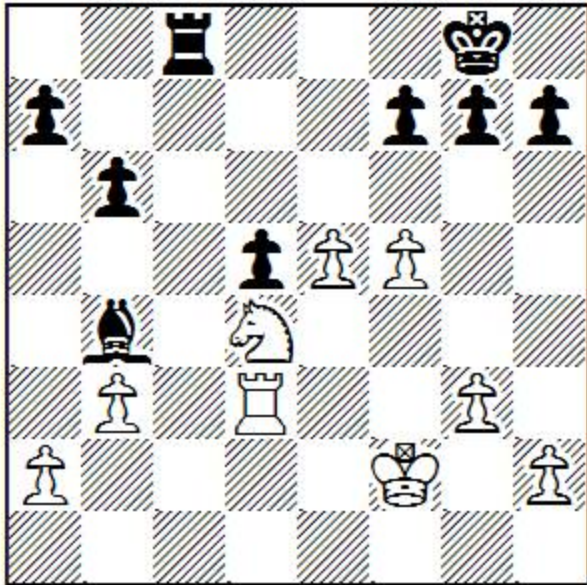
22 Rxd3 Rac8 23 Nf3 Rc2+?!

It was more cautious to restrict the opponent's possibilities by 23 ... g6. No advantage for White is evident after either 24 Rf2 Rfd8 25 Bb2 (25 Re2!?) 25 ... d4! 26 Nxd4 Bc5 27 Rfd2 Nxd4 28 Bxd4 Rxd4 29 Rxd4 Bxd4 30 Rxd4 Rc2+, or 24 ... Nc5 25 Bxc5 Rxc5 26 Nd4 Rfc8 27 f5 Re8.

24 Rf2 Rfc8 25 f5!

'At last the phalanx of white pawns begins advancing.' (Karpov)

25 ... Nxd4 26 Nxd4 Rxf2+ 27 Kxf2



The evaluation of the position has clarified: White has an obvious advantage, but playing for a win is made difficult by the fact that there is little material left on the board.

27 ... Rc1 (activating the rook is Black's only hope of saving the game)

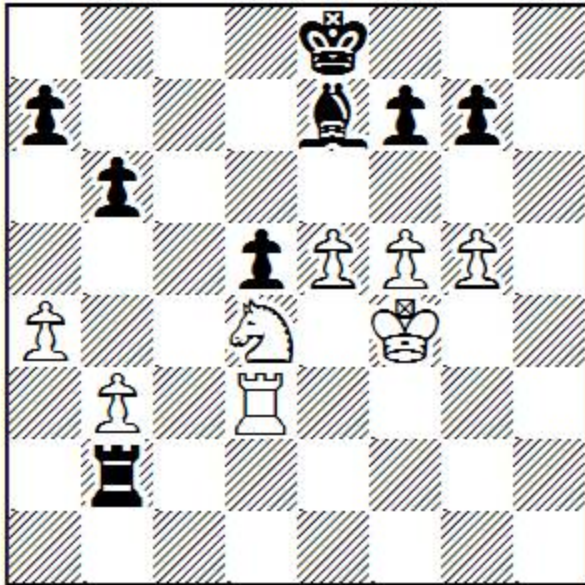
28 g4 Kf8 29 Kf3 Rf1+ 30 Kg3 Rc1

Giving another check 30 ... Rg1+ might not have appealed to Sokolov because of 31 Kf4! (31 Kh3 Rc1) 31 ... Rg2 (31 ... Rf1+ 32 Nf3 Karpov) 32 Nc6 Rf2+ 33 Kg3 Be1 34 Kh3.

31 Kf4 h6 32 h4 Ke8 33 Nf3 Rc2 34 a4 Rb2 35 Nd4 Be7 36 h5

Karpov advanced this pawn after a long think, using up nearly all of his remaining time. He probably did not want to take any actions involving a reduction in the number of pawns and therefore demanding accurate calculation. But on this occasion was he not let down by his intuition?

This move was condemned by most of the commentators, who considered 36 g5 hxg5+ 37 hxg5 to be stronger. Let us continue the analysis with the moves 37 ... a6 (waiting and covering the b5-square) and 37 ... Rb1 (waiting and giving greater scope to the rook).



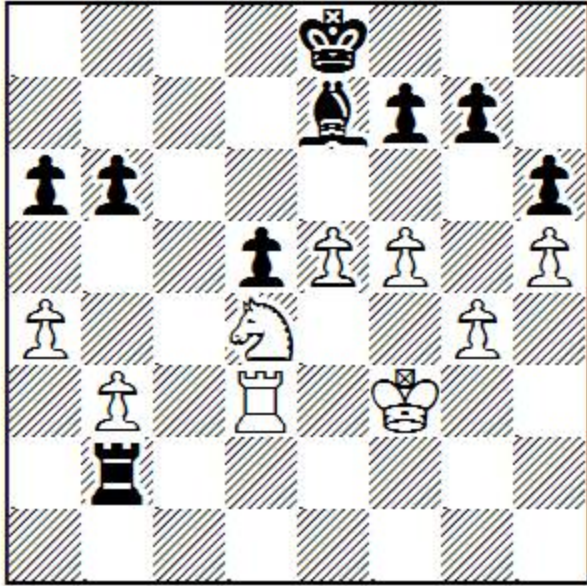
Analysis diagram

So, 37 ... a6 38 f6 gxf6 39 gxf6 Bc5 40 Nf3 Ba3! (the best defence – an attack on the white pawns that have moved onto dark squares!) 41 Kf5 Rf2 42 e6 Bb2! 43 b4 (after 43 e7 a5 White is unable to strengthen his position) 43 ... b5 44 axb5 axb5 45 e7 Rf1 46 Kg5 Rf2 47 Rb3 Bc1+ 48 Kf5 Bb2 – the draw is obvious.

In the event of 37 ... Rb1 38 f6 (38 Nf3 Bc5 39 f6, intending 39 ... gxf6 40 exf6!, is parried by 39 ... g6! 40 Nd2 Re1! 41 Rxd5 Be3+ with a draw) 38 ... gxf6 39 gxf6 Bc5 an analogous variation is possible: 40 Nf3 a5! (40 ... Rb2 is dangerous: 41 Kf5 Re2 42 Rxd5 Re3 43 Ng5 Rxb3 44 Nxf7!) 41 Kf5 Rf1 42 e6 Bd4! 43 e7 Bb2. Another resource – 40 Nb5 – does not prevent Black from carrying out roughly the same idea: 40 ... Rf1+ 41 Rf3 Re1 42 Nc7+ Kd7 43 Nxd5 Bd4 or 42 Nxa7 Kd7 43 Nb5 Bg1 44 Rh3 Rf1+ 45 Kg4 Ke6, and again the white pawns are vulnerable.

But this does not exhaust the analysis of 36 g5. It is possible that the 'logical' 38 f6 is a mistake, whereas the unexpected 38 g6 gives a different picture: 37 ... a6 38 g6!? fxg6 39 fxg6 Rg2 40 Ne6 Rxd6 41 Nc7+, or 37 ... Rb1 38 g6!? fxg6 39 fxg6 Rg1 40 Nb5. By giving up his g-pawn, White intends to regain the a- and d-pawns, after which Black can rely only on the restricted amount of material.

36 ... a6 37 Kf3

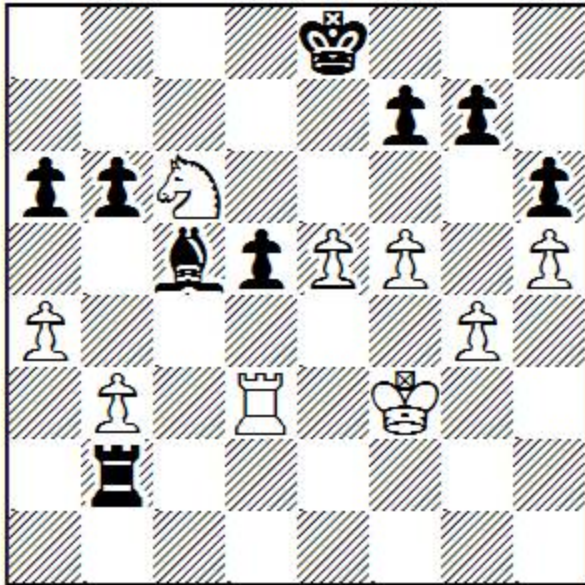


37 ... Bc5?

In time-trouble both players begin making mistakes. Control of the g5-square (and, as it turns out, of d8!) was important, and therefore Black should have manoeuvred with his rook – 37 ... Rh2. For example: 38 Nc6 (38 Kg3 Rb2) 38 ... Rh3+ (after 38 ... Kd7 the pretty knight sacrifice 39 Nb8+! Kc7 40 Nxa6+ Kb7 41 Rxd5 Kxa6 42 Rd7 Bg5 43 Rxf7 leads to a situation where the white pawns cannot be stopped) 39 Ke2 Rh2+ 40 Ke3 Rh3+ (not 40 ... Bc5+ 41 Kf4 Rf2+ 42 Kg3 – this position is examined below) 41 Kd2 Rh2+ 42 Kc3 Rg2, and the result of the game is still unclear.

38 Ne2?

Karpov does not venture 38 Nc6! – with minimal forces White quite unexpectedly creates mating threats, which in combination with pawn breakthroughs promise a win!



Analysis diagram

Black has several possible replies:

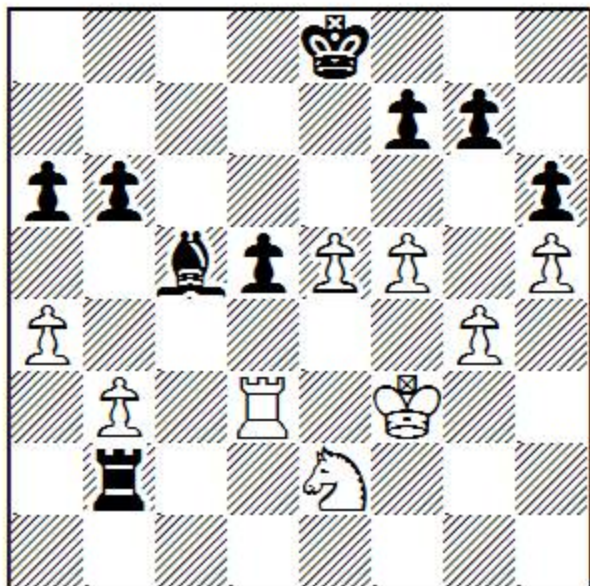
1) the passive defence 38 ... Rf2+ 39 Kg3 Rb2 is breached by 40 g5! hxg5 41 Rxd5 Rxb3+ 42 Kg4 Be7 43 h6! gxh6 44 f6;

2) after 38 ... d4 39 g5! hxg5 40 b4! (White wants to exploit the same device: 40 ... Bxb4 41 Rxd4 Be7 42 h6) 40 ... Be7 41 h6 gxh6 42 Rxd4 Rb3+ 43 Ke2 f6 44 e6 the e6-pawn costs Black his rook (44 ... Kf8 45 Rd7 Bxb4 46 Rd8+ Kg7 47 Nxb4 Rxb4 48 Kd3 Rb3+ 49 Kd4 Rb4+ 50 Kd5 Rf4 51 e7 Rxf5+ 52 Kd4 Re5 53 e8Q Rxe8 54 Rxe8 h5 55 Ke4, or 50 ... Rxa4 51 e7 Ra5+ 52 Kd6 Re5 53 e8Q Rxe8 54 Rxe8 h5 55 Ke6);

3) finally, 38 ... Be7, in order if 39 b4 Bxb4 40 g5 to exchange rooks by 40 ... Be1 41 Rxd5 Rd2 42 Rxd2 Bxd2, also loses after 43 g6 – 43 ... b5 44 f6 Kf8 45 axb5 axb5 46 e6 fxe6 47 f7, or 43 ... f6 44 exf6 gxf6 45 Nd8 Kf8 46 Ne6+ Kg8 47 Nc7;

4) the last chance is to transpose into a rook endgame: 38 ... Rf2+ 39 Kg3 Rc2! 40 Rxd5 (40 Nb8 a5! 41 Rxd5 Rc3+ 42 Kf4 Rxb3 43 Nc6 Be7 also reduces to a rook endgame, but in a worse version for White) 40 ... Bf2+ 41 Kf3 Rxc6 42 Kxf2 Rc3. Black regains the pawn but, as it turns out, only temporarily after 43 Rd6! Rxb3 44 f6! gxf6 45 Rxf6 Rb4 46 Kf3, and he is unable to combat the passed pawns that White will soon create.

Since the time-trouble had not yet ended, it was now Sokolov's turn to make a mistake.

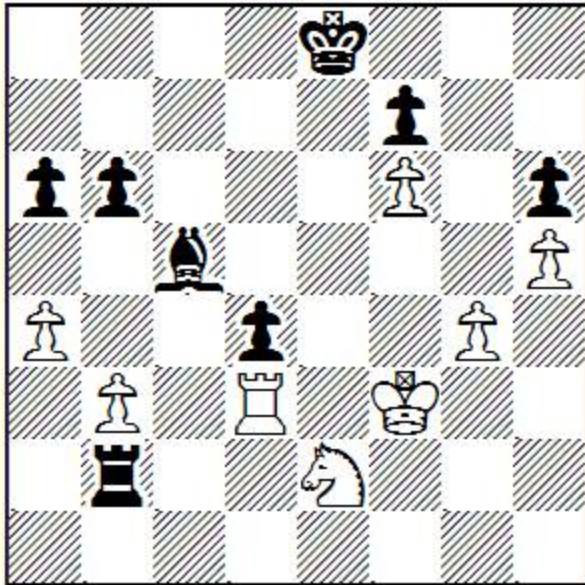


38 ... d4?!

This makes the defence much more difficult. After the waiting move 38 ... Rb1! the white rook is tied to the defence of the pawn, there are no mating threats against the black king, and the game is close to a draw: 39 Nf4 Rf1+ 40 Kg3 Rg1+ 41 Ng2 Rb1 42 Ne3 Bxe3 43 Rxe3 Kd7.

39 Nf4

All in the same manner. As on the 36th move, Karpov avoids forcing events – 39 f6!? gxf6 40 exf6.



Analysis diagram

At first sight this continuation gives White good winning chances: 40 ... Rb1? 41 Ng3 Kd7 (41 ... Bd6 42 Nf5 Be5 43 Nxh6 Bxf6 44 Nf5 also leads to a difficult position) 42 g5! hxc5 43 h6 Rb2 44 Nf1 g4+ 45 Kxg4 Re2 (45 ... Rg2+ 46 Rg3 Re2 47 h7 Re8 48 Kf5 Rh8 49 Rg7 is no better) 46 b4! Bd6 (46 ... Bxb4 47 Rxd4+ Bd6 48 Ng3) 47 Rxd4, and Black can resign.

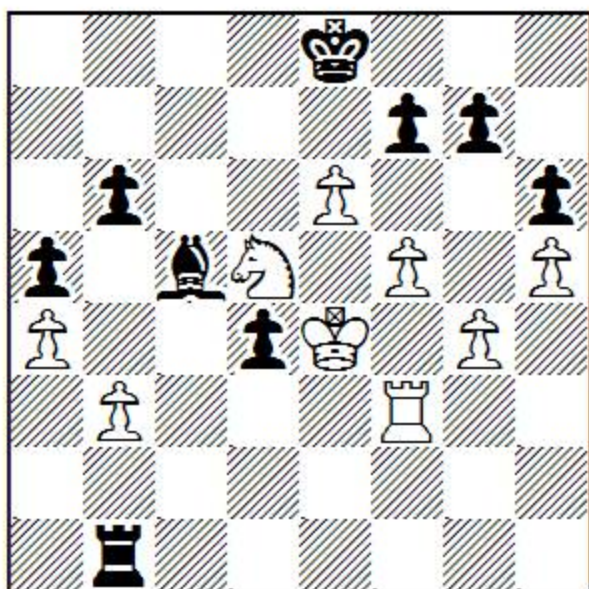
Hopes are offered only by the rook endgame after 40 ... Kd7! 41 Nxd4 Bxd4 42 Rxd4+ Ke6 43 Rb4 Kxf6 (or 43 ... b5!?, reducing the material remaining on the board: 44 axb5 axb5 45 Rxb5 Kxf6 46 b4 Rb1) 44 Rxb6+ Kg5. By now continuing 45 a5, White obtains two connected passed pawns, but it would appear that Black is saved by a miracle in the form of 45 ... Ra2! 46 b4 Ra4. To gain time, the rook stands as far away as possible from the white king, and after 47 Ke4 Kxg4 48 Kd5 f5 49 Kc5 Kxh5 50 Rxa6 f4 Black creates saving counterplay. For example: 51 Rf6 Kg5 52 Rf8 h5 53 Kb5 Ra1 54 a6 (or 54 Ka6 h4 55 b5 h3 56 Rh8 Kg4 57 b6 Kg3 58 b7 Rb1 – the draw is obvious) 54 ... Kg4! (not 54 ... h4 55 Kb6 h3?? 56 a7 Kg4 57 a8Q Rxa8 58 Rxa8 h2 59 Ra1 f3 60 Kc5 and wins; the f-pawn is the more important queening candidate, and therefore it was not yet too late for 55 ... Kg4! 56 a7 f3 57 a8Q Rxa8 58 Rxa8 f2, drawing) 55 Kb6 f3 56 a7 Kg3 57 a8Q Rxa8 58 Rxa8 f2 with a draw.

Instead of 41 Nxd4 White can, of course, try the same breakthrough as after 40 ... Rb1, namely: 41 g5 hxg5 42 h6. But here Black deals with the h6-pawn without losing material: 42 ... g4+ 43 Kf2 Rb1! (43 ... g3+? 44 Kf3 g2 45 Ng1 Rb1 is bad in view of 46 Kxg2, but not 46 h7? Rxg1 47 h8Q Rh1, when it is White who has to save himself: 48 Rxd4+! Bxd4 49 Qf8 with perpetual check) 44 Ng3 Rb2+ 45 Kg1 Rb1+ 46 Nf1 Re1 etc.

39 ... Kd7 40 e6+ Ke8 41 Ke4 a5 42 Rf3!

The sealed move, over which Karpov thought for nearly 20 minutes.

42 ... Rb1 43 Nd5!



43 ... Rg1?

In his adjournment analysis Sokolov did not find a reliable method of defence, and he apparently went along to resume what he thought was a lost endgame. Karpov was of the same opinion. However, in fact the adjourned position was most probably drawn!

In 64 Igor Zaitsev disclosed the study-like way with which Karpov and his team (Zaitsev, Podgaets and Ubilava) were intending to conclude the game after 43 ... Kf8!, which is undoubtedly the best move. After a night-time and morning analysis they were planning 44 e7+! Bxe7 45 Kxd4 Rg1 46 Kc4! Rxg4+ 47 Kb5 Bd8 48 Rc3 Rh4 49 Kc6 Rxh5 50 Kd7 Rxf5 51 Nxb6! A pretty 'winning stroke'. Karpov: 'Since 51 ... Bxb6 leads to an amusing mate after 52 Rc8+, Black is

forced to give up the exchange – 51 ... Rf3, and after 52 Rxf3 Bxb6 the unavoidable b3-b4 breakthrough is decisive.'

But let's try sacrificing the bishop: 51 ... g5! 52 Kxd8 g4 53 Nc4 h5 – and isn't it now Black who is playing for a win here?!

Therefore, in my view, 48 Kc6! is stronger: 48 ... Rh4 49 Nxb6 Bxb6 (49 ... Rxh5 50 Nd7+ Kg8 51 Re3) 50 Kxb6 Rxh5 51 Kxa5, and White wins the pawn race: 51 ... g5 52 b4 g4 53 Rf1 g3 54 b5 Rxf5 55 Rg1 Rf3 (55 ... Rg5 56 Ka6) 56 b6 Rb3 57 Ka6 h5 58 b7 h4 59 Ka7 f5 60 a5 f4 61 a6 f3 (61 ... h3 62 Ka8!) 62 Ka8! f2 63 Rc1 g2 64 a7 etc. But here 48 ... Rd4! is better: 49 Nxb6 Be7 (49 ... Bxb6 50 Kxb6 Rd5 51 b4 axb4 52 a5), trying to control the b4-square.

This last variation suggests that the Karpov team's 'study' also has an earlier defect. Indeed, instead of 47 ... Bd8 it is more accurate to play the immediate 47 ... Rd4! 48 Nxb6 Bb4, and this blockade would appear to be impregnable.

44 Kd3 Rxg4?!

44 ... Kf8 45 Rf4 Rg3+ 46 Kc4 d3 47 Kc3 Ke8, was somewhat more tenacious, although after 48 f6 or 48 e7! f6 49 Re4 Bd6 50 Kd2 White is close to a win.

45 f6!

The crux of White's plan. Black is not saved by either 45 ... fxe6 46 f7+ Kd7 (46 ... Kf8 47 Nc7) 47 Nxb6+ Kc6 48 Nc4, or the 'tenacious' 45 ... Rg5 46 Nc7+ Kd8 47 e7+ Bxe7 48 fxe7+ Kxe7 (Karpov) 49 Kxd4 Rxh5 50 Nd5+.

45 ... Bd6 46 Nxb6 Rg5 47 fxg7 Rxg7 48 Nc4 Bb4 49 exf7+ Rxf7 50 Rxf7 Kxf7 51 Ne5+! Kf6 52 Nc6 Be1 53 Nxd4 Bb4 54 Nc6 Be1 55 Ke2 Bc3 56 Kd3 Be1 57 Kc4 Kg5 58 Nxa5!

An elegant solution: the white pawns finish first by a big margin.

58 ... Bxa5 59 b4 Bd8 60 a5 Kxh5 61 Kb5 Bg5 62 a6 Be3 63 Kc6 1-0

Black resigned, and the score became 6½-3½ in Karpov's favour.

In the 11th game after 1 e4 c6, having despaired of gaining an advantage after 2 d4 d5 3 Nd2 dxe4 4 Nxe4 Nd7 (3rd, 5th and 7th games) or 3 e5 Bf5 4 Nc3 e6 5 g4 Bg6 6 Nge2 c5 (9th), Sokolov followed their starting duel – 2 c4 d5 3 exd5 cxd5 4 cxd5 Nf6 5 Nc3 Nxd5 6 Nf3, but Karpov, taking into account his opponent's condition, 'changed tune' – 6 ... Nxc3!? 7 bxc3 g6. And ... 'abandoning his unique competitive qualities as though they were no use, Sokolov replaced them with sheer passion. But in my opinion, to win against the 12th world champion by acting in this way is in principle impossible.' (Makarichev). After 8 h4?!

Bg7! 9 h5 Nc6 10 Rb1 Qc7 11 Ba3?! Bf5 12 Rb5 a6 13 Rc5 Qd7 14 Qb3 0-0 15 hxg6 hxg6 16 Bc4 Bf6! 17 d4 b5! 18 Bd5 Na5 19 Qd1 Nb7! Black soon won the game, and with it the match: 7½-3½.

‘Andrey possesses a memorable attacking style, he splendidly and accurately calculates complicated variations, and he is adept at handling a dynamic endgame. Yet for the moment his style cannot be called universal, since there are a number of technical and manoeuvring-type positions, where he does not feel so confident as in sharp and complicated situations,’ wrote Igor Zaitsev in 64. ‘Our objective consisted in avoiding the latter type of position, and in obtaining the former. For the greater part Karpov was able to hold his opponent at a distance, though not always, it is true. In the 6th game there were some real fireworks. Given the slightest carelessness, something similar could also have begun in the 11th. But in the majority of cases, things did not come to a close-range fight ... Karpov’s play, his virtuoso technique and his ability to penetrate into the essence of the position, make a great impression.’

Both the score and the opening discussion were simply catastrophic for Sokolov: a complete rout! The great champion’s flexible, infiltrating manner of play proved an unresolvable mystery for Andrey. Unfortunately, he was subsequently unable to learn fully the lessons from his match defeat and to correct his chess deficiencies. Gradually the results of this undoubtedly talented grandmaster declined, and within a few years Sokolov had dropped out of the world elite.

But Karpov emerged renewed from this match: there was both 1 ... c6, and consolidation of the positions with 1 d4. Whereas in the 1970s he used to play the same Spanish *tabiyas* for both colours with identical success, now the Queen’s Indian with 4 g3 became ‘Karpov territory’, on which he felt more confident than anyone. It can safely be said that Karpov’s many years of subsequent success can be tied in with the fact that here with Black he could always neutralise the opponent’s advantage and, given the opportunity, launch a counterattack, while with White he was constantly seeking additional resources for developing that meagre advantage, which White usually enjoys in the Queen’s Indian (an account of this is given later: *Game Nos.97-100*).

In our fourth match for the crown (Seville, October-December 1987) Karpov took the lead after I made a blunder during the resumption of the 23rd game, but then he cracked under the infernal tension of the concluding, 24th game. I managed to level the scores (12-12) and

retain my title. Now our disputes were deferred – at last! – for three years, and Karpov had to begin the qualifying process from the Candidates quarter-final match.

Chasing two Birds

‘Anatoly Karpov’s fighting spirit is truly indomitable!’ wrote the magazine *Shakhmaty v SSSR* in 1988. ‘Almost immediately after the match in Seville our illustrious grandmaster was victorious in Wijk aan Zee, he finished second in the Euwe Memorial (behind Short, whom he beat in their individual game), and finally he won the first stage of the World Cup and received the prize for the best game of the tournament!’ The game in question was a win against Timman, then the third-rated player in the world – with White in a fashionable variation of the Queen’s Gambit Accepted: 1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 e4 Nf6 4 e5 Nd5 5 Bxc4 Nb6 6 Bd3 (6 Bb3 – *Game No.48*) 6 ... Nc6 7 Ne2 Bg4 8 Be3 etc.

I should remind you that in 1988-89, apart from the usual FIDE Candidates cycle, for the first time the World Cup was contested – this was effectively a tournament championship of the planet, organised by the Grandmasters Association (GMA). The two-year cycle consisted of six super-tournaments at classical time limits: Brussels – Belfort – Reykjavik – Barcelona – Rotterdam – Skelleftea. The 25 strongest grandmasters took part – each played in four of the six tournaments, and the three best results were taken into account. It need hardly be said how sharply the intensity of chess life increased, and what a fierce rivalry in the fight for this new prestigious trophy flared up between the 12th and 13th world champions!

I did not take part in the first World Cup tournament in April, but in May we met in a four-player match-tournament in Amsterdam (1. Kasparov – 9 out of 12; 2. Karpov – 6½; 3. Timman – 5½, etc.; my result against Karpov was +2=2), and in July – in the second stage of the World Cup in Belfort. Before our game in the penultimate round Karpov was two points behind me, but a successful novelty in the Grünfeld Defence, in the Zaitsev Variation, which was a subject of dispute between us in both Seville, and Amsterdam (1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 d5 4 cxd5 Nxd5 5 e4 Nxc3 6 bxc3 Bg7 7 Bc4 c5 8 Ne2 Nc6 9 Be3 0-0 10 0-0 Bg4 11 f3 Na5 12 Bxf7+!? Rxf7 13 fxe4 Rxf1+ 14 Kxf1 Qd6 etc.), enabled him to win and as a result to reduce the deficit: 1. Kasparov – 11½ out of 15; 2. Karpov – 10½, etc.

That same summer, into the tight schedule of super-tournaments was wedged the 55th USSR Championship (Moscow 1988), the strongest for a long time – the last in history which brought together the entire cream of Soviet chess. Here too there was a tough battle between Karpov and me for the title, although, of course, we also had other rivals. After eight rounds the leading group looked like this: Beliavsky and Salov – 5½; Karpov, Kasparov and Yusupov – 5. In the 9th round Salov defeated Beliavsky, while Karpov won a splendid game against Yusupov.

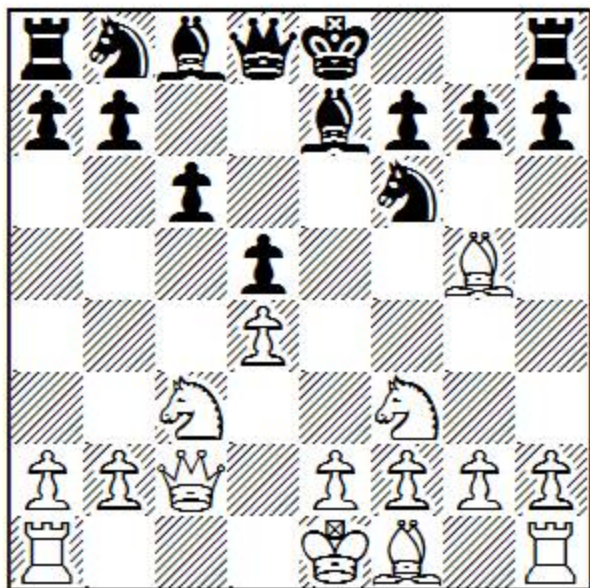
Game 92

A.Karpov-A.Yusupov

55th USSR Championship, Moscow 1988, 9th round

Queen's Gambit D36

1 c4 e6 2 Nc3 d5 3 d4 Be7 4 Nf3 Nf6 5 cxd5 exd5 6 Bg5 c6 7 Qc2

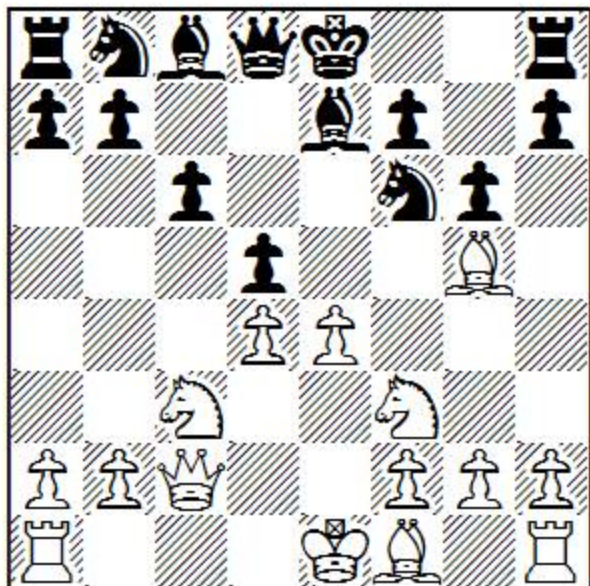


Karpov is aiming for the classical Carlsbad set-up, which he usually played very successfully as White. But with this move order Black can immediately solve the problem of his c8-bishop's development.

7 ... g6 8 e4

Timman's plan, first employed by him against Short (Belgrade 1987). 8 e3 Bf5, as occurred in the well-known game Bobotsov-

Petrosian (*Volume 3, Game No.43*), is too insipid.



8 ... Nxe4?!

A new idea, which proves not altogether successful. The aforementioned Timman-Short game went 8 ... dxe4 9 Bxf6 Bxf6 10 Qxe4+ Kf8 11 Bc4 Kg7 12 0-0 Re8 13 Qf4 Be6 14 Bxe6 Rxe6 15 Rfe1 Rxe1+ 16 Rxe1 Nd7 17 Ne4 Be7 18 h4 with the initiative for White. But further experience showed that 15 ... Qd6 nevertheless maintains equality: 16 Qxd6 Rxd6 17 Ne4 Rd8 18 Nxf6 Kxf6 19 Re4 Na6 20 Rae1 Rd7 21 Ne5 Rc7, and little-by-little White's activity is neutralised.

Instead of 10 ... Kf8 another way is also suitable: 10 ... Qe7 11 Bc4 0-0 12 0-0 Bf5 (12 ... Qb4 13 Qf4 Bf5 transposes) 13 Qf4 Qb4 14 Ne5 (14 Bb3 Nd7 Ruban-Dreev, Tbilisi 1989) 14 ... Bxe5 15 dxe5 Be6 16 Ne4 Qxc4 17 Rac1 Qb5 18 a4 Qa5 19 Nf6+ Kg7 20 Nh5+ with perpetual check (Gulko-Yusupov, Munich 1990).

The variation with 8 e4 gradually went out of use, but at that time it was very topical.

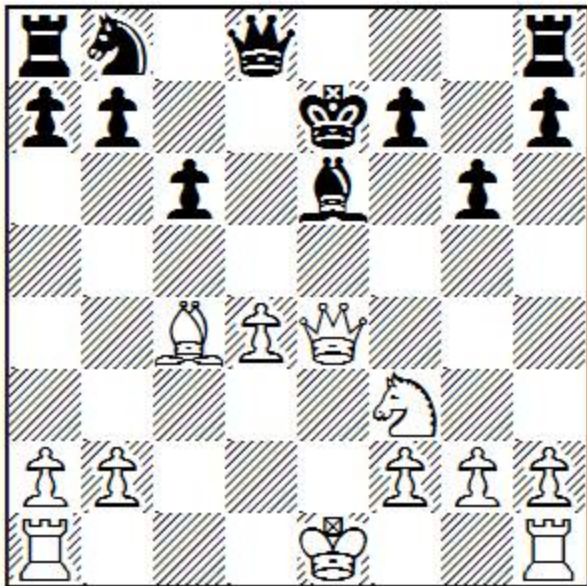
9 Bxe7 Kxe7

9 ... Qxe7? loses immediately to 10 Nxd5! – this is the tactical basis of Timman's idea.

10 Nxe4 dxe4 11 Qxe4+ Be6

In the game Novikov-Brodsky (Erevan 1996) White held the initiative after 11 ... Kf8 12 Bc4 Bf5 13 Qf4 Qe7+ 14 Kf1! Kg7 15 Ng5.

12 Bc4



12 ... Qa5+

The other defensive possibility is 12 ... Re8 13 Bxe6 Kf8, for example: 14 0-0 Rxe6 15 Qf4 Kg7 16 Rfe1 Rxe1+ 17 Rxe1 Nd7. Zilberman-Polajzer (Bled 1989) continued 18 Qd6 (this position would also have been obtained by Timman, if instead of 18 h4 he had played 18 Nd6 Bxd6 19 Qxd6) 18 ... Nf6 19 Qe7 Qd7 and here by 20 Ng5 Re8 21 Ne6+ Kg8 22 Qxf6 Rxe6 23 Rxe6 White could have given his opponent a choice between two inferior endings – queen (23 ... fxe6) and pawn (23 ... Qxe6 24 Qxe6 fxe6 25 f4 – it is not clear whether Black has a draw). However, after 15 ... Qf6 there is no way for White to strengthen his position significantly: 16 Qh6+ Qg7 17 Qh4 Nd7, or 16 Qg3 Kg7 17 Rae1 Na6.

Of course, in these variations there are some dangers for Black, but nevertheless fewer than in the event of the quiet 13 Qh4+ Kf8 14 Qxd8 Rxd8 15 Bxe6 fxe6 16 0-0-0. The e6-pawn is weak, and after the approximate 16 ... Rd6 17 Ng5 h6 18 Ne4 Rd7 19 Nc5 Re7 20 Rhe1 the situation becomes extremely unpleasant for him.

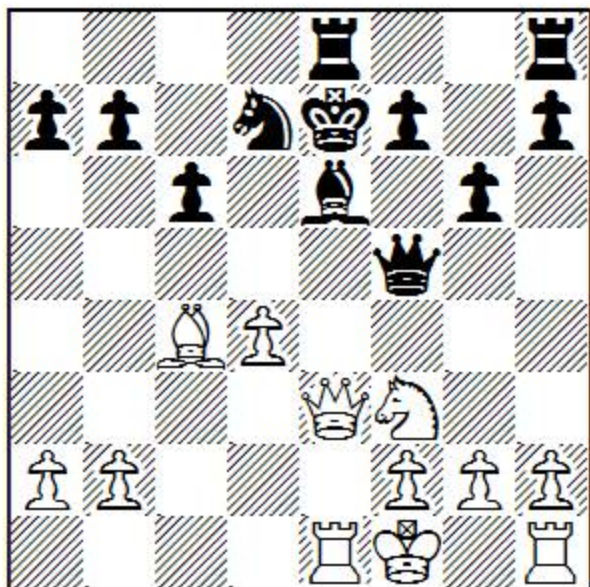
13 Kf1! Qf5 14 Qe3

The endgame with a weak pawn at e6 (after 14 Re1 – this was probably the best choice) is good for White, although not as favourable

as in the variation with 12 ... Re8. But Karpov reckons that – with the king at e7! – things will be more difficult for Black with the queens on.

14 ... **Nd7** (if 14 ... Na6?!, intending ... Nc7, then 15 d5! cxd5 16 Qa3+ Kf6 17 Bxa6 bxa6 18 Qc3+ Ke7 19 Nd4 is strong) 15 **Re1 Rae8**

Black is obviously preparing to evacuate his king to the queenside, and White decides to make a breakthrough.



16 **d5!**

Karpov spent more than 40 minutes considering this sacrifice. He thought that this was the critical moment of the game: 'White obviously has numerous tactical possibilities, but I was unable to unite them in a logical chain of moves. It was clear to me that for the development of the initiative I had to sacrifice my central pawn, but what next? And suddenly the realisation came to me: the weak dark squares in Black's position are defended by his knight. And then I immediately found a manoeuvre, the aim of which was to eliminate this knight.'

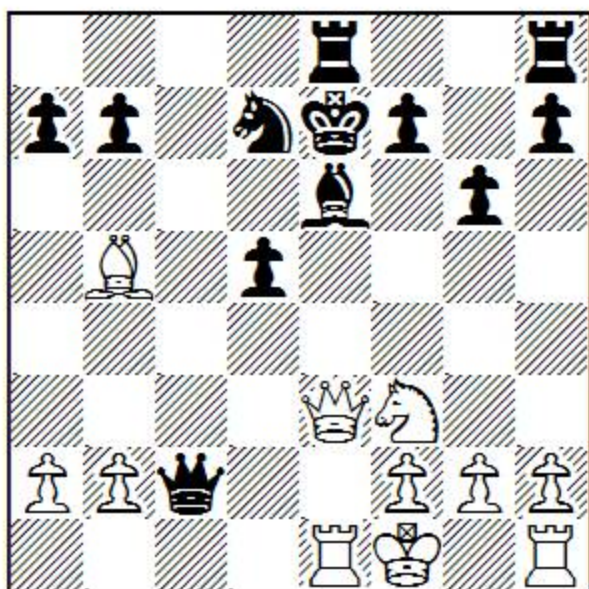
Nothing was given by the direct 16 Bxe6 fxe6 17 Qa3+ on account of 17 ... Kd8! (17 ... Kf6 involves a transparent trap – 18 Qxa7?? Qb5+ 19 Kg1 Ra8, but after 18 Kg1 a6 19 h4 Black's position is unenviable) 18 Qxa7 Kc7 19 Qa3 Ra8 20 Qc3 Qb5+ 21 Kg1 Rxa2 22 b3 Qd5 23 h4 Rf8 24 Rh3 Rf5 25 Rg3 Nf6. Another tempting move – 16 Ng5 would also have allowed Black to regain his pawn after 16 ... Kd8! 17

Nxe6+ fxe6 18 Bxe6 Qb5+ 19 Re2 Rhf8 20 Qb3 Rf4 21 Qxb5 cxb5 22 d5 Rd4 23 g3 Nc5 with a probable draw.

16 ... cxd5 17 Bb5 (17 Nd4 Qe5!) 17 ... a6?

The decisive mistake. Karpov recommends 17 ... d4, but this too would have lost by force: 18 Nxd4 Qd5 19 Rd1 Qh5 20 Be2 Qe5 21 Qa3+ Kf6 22 Nxe6 Rxe6 23 Qf3+ Ke7 24 Bc4 Rf6 25 Qxb7 etc.

Meanwhile, no one noticed the cool-headed 17 ... Qc2! This is not simply an attack on the b2-pawn, but also a significant change in the queen's role in the forthcoming struggle (in the game it was driven back to the pitiful square h6).



Analysis diagram

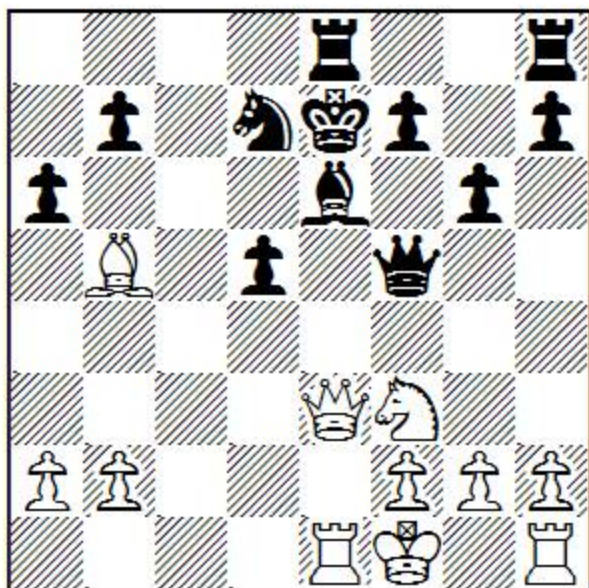
It is not at all obvious how White can exploit the 'indecent' position of Black's king and his other pieces. After all, White's king is also separating his rooks and hindering the reserves from coming into play:

1) 18 b4 a6 19 Bxd7 Kxd7 20 Ne5+ Ke7 21 h4 d4!? 22 Qxd4 Rd8 23 Qe3 Rd1, and Black has seized the initiative;

2) 18 Nd4 Qxb2 19 a4 Kf6 20 Qf4+, and 20 ... Kg7? 21 Nxe6+ Rxe6 22 Rxe6 fxe6 23 Bxd7 (23 ... Qb1+ 24 Ke2 Qxh1? 25 Qe5+) is bad for Black, but 20 ... Bf5 21 Nxf5 Rxe1+ 22 Kxe1 gxf5 is possible – White has nothing better than perpetual check.

We have seen many times how verification with a computer can make corrections to the evaluation of even the seemingly most

impeccable games.



18 Qa3+

With a series of precise geometric manoeuvres, Karpov drives the black pieces into a situation of complete stalemate.

18 ... Kd8 19 Qa5+! Ke7

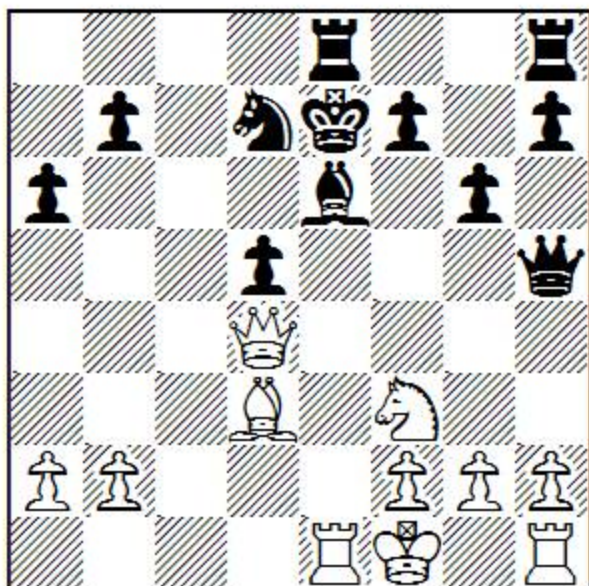
It is not possible to run to the queenside: 19 ... Kc8 20 Rc1+ Kb8 21 Qc7+ Ka8 22 Nd4, and Black is forced to give up the exchange – 22 ... Qe5 23 Qxe5 Nxe5 24 Bxe8, since 22 ... Qf6 23 Bxa6! (after 23 Bc6 Rb8 24 Nxe6 bxc6 25 Qxc6+ Rb7 26 Qxa6+ Kb8 27 Qd6+ Ka8 it unexpectedly transpires that 28 Nc7+ Kb8 29 Qxd7 Rxb2! 30 f3 Qb6 31 Rc5 Rc8 gives only a draw; 28 Qa3+ Kb8 29 Rc6 is better, but here too after 29 ... fxe6 30 Qd6+ Ka8 31 Ra6+ Ra7 32 Rxa7+ Kxa7 33 Qxd7+ Kb6 it is not easy to indicate a clear way for White to gain an advantage) 23 ... Rb8 24 Rc3! (not Karpov's move 24 Qa5 on account of 24 ... Rbc8!, but not 24 ... Qxd4?? 25 Bxb7) 24 ... Qxd4 (24 ... bxa6 25 Qc6+ Ka7 26 Ra3 etc.) 25 Be2 leads to the loss of the queen.

20 Qb4+ Kf6

If 20 ... Kd8, then 21 Be2 is good, as well as Zaitsev's very spectacular recommendation 21 Nd4 Qf6 22 Bxa6! bxa6 23 Rc1! Reg8 24 Rc6! – Black is helpless.

21 Qd4+ Ke7 22 Bd3 Qh5

After 22 ... Qf6 23 Qb4+ White picks up the queenside pawns, and the black king is still in the danger zone.



23 h4! (the queen is pinned to the edge of the board!) 23 ... Kd8 24 Ng5 Rhf8 25 Be2 (25 f3 and Kf2, connecting the rooks, was also good) 25 ... Qh6 26 Bf3 Re7 27 Qb4! Nf6 28 Qd6+

28 Qf4 (Karpov) would have won immediately, but in any case Black has no defence.

28 ... Rd7 29 Qf4 Ng8 30 Bg4! Kc8 31 Bxe6 fxe6 32 Rc1+ Kd8 33 Nxe6+ Ke7 34 Qxf8+ Qxf8 35 Nxf8 Kxf8 36 Rh3 Ne7 37 h5 Kg7 38 h6+ Kf6 39 Rf3+ Ke6 40 Re1+ Kd6 41 Rf6+ Kc7 42 g4 Nc6 43 Re8 d4 1-0

This last move was sealed. Without resuming, Black resigned.

In the 14th round I beat Salov and for two days broke ahead, but in the 16th round Karpov cleanly outplayed Malaniuk in the Leningrad Variation of the Dutch Defence, and we arrived at the finish together: 1-2. Kasparov and Karpov – 11½ out of 17 (+6=11); 3-4. Yusupov and Salov – 10, etc. The regulations stipulated an additional match of four games for the title of USSR Champion, but Karpov did not want to play it, and the Sports Committee officials together with his arbiter colleagues went along with him. As a result, champion's medals were awarded to us both (this is described in more detail in Volume 2, in the chapter about Botvinnik).

In September in excellent style Karpov won a six-player super-tournament in Tilburg, on this occasion a double-round event – $10\frac{1}{2}$ out of 14 (+7=7), in which he finished two points ahead of Short and twice beat Timman. In November I fought alongside him for the Soviet team at the Olympiad in Thessaloniki, and we scored +7=3 and +6=4 respectively (1. USSR – $40\frac{1}{2}$ out of 56; 2-3. England and Holland – $34\frac{1}{2}$, etc.).

Then with considerable difficulty I won the third stage of the World Cup (Reykjavik, October 1988), and in the fourth (Barcelona, spring 1989) I shared 1st-2nd places with Ljubojevic (but he came first on the tie-break). Karpov did not take part in these tournaments, but he had not lost hope of winning the World Cup. In passing he shared victory in the rapidplay championships of Europe and the world, staged by FIDE (1988), and early in 1989 in Seattle he won a short quarter-final Candidates match against Hjartarson ($3\frac{1}{2}$ - $1\frac{1}{2}$) and finished second behind Ivanchuk in Linares.

The fifth stage of the World Cup (Rotterdam, June 1989) became probably the most dramatic tournament in Karpov's chess biography. In order to catch up with me before the concluding battle in Skelleftea, he had to take 1st place, at the same time scoring at least 11 out of 15 against the best grandmasters. And the ex-world champion started with 5 out of 6, and later had $9\frac{1}{2}$ out of 12! He only needed to make three draws, but ... his strength ran out. He suffered three defeats in a row – against Salov, Ljubojevic and Nunn – and conceded 1st place to Timman! At the closing ceremony the happy Dutchman called this result the best in his career.

In the sixth tournament (Skelleftea, August-September 1989) Karpov could still have achieved overall success, if he had taken clear 1st place, scored 11 out of 15 (again!) and finished a point ahead of me. We met as early as the 2nd round, and I completely outplayed him with Black in a King's Indian Defence, but missed a win in my opponent's severe time-trouble. Nikitin: 'This draw did both players a disservice.' Even so we finished joint first, each scoring $9\frac{1}{2}$ out of 15.

Our lead in points over the other contestants in the World Cup comprised almost a whole tournament: 1. Kasparov – 83 points; 2. Karpov – 81; 3. Salov – $68\frac{1}{2}$; 4. Ehlvest – 68; 5. Ljubojevic – $66\frac{1}{2}$; 6. Nunn – $65\frac{1}{2}$; 7-8. Beliavsky and Short – $63\frac{1}{2}$; 9-10. Hübner and Timman – $57\frac{1}{2}$; 11. A.Sokolov – 57, etc. A summing-up of this

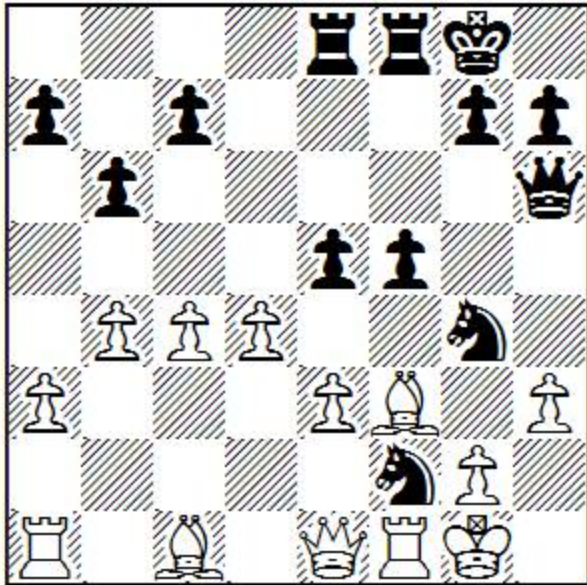
unprecedented two-year race was given on the pages of the magazine *Shakhmaty v SSSR* by Alexander Nikitin:

‘In this cycle it would seem that the generation of the Fischer era made its farewell. Against their young colleagues it has become hard for the brilliant aces to compete – Korchnoi, Tal, Portisch, Spassky, but they performed quite worthily ... It is doubtful whether they will all pass through the Swiss sieve, the almost lottery-like qualifier for the next World Cup – the years take their toll. And it can be expected that within a year a new generation will appear to compete with the Karpov generation and the Kasparov generation. The brightest and most prepared for such a competition, in my view, are Ivanchuk, Lautier, Gelfand, Dreev, Anand and Akopian.’

In all these experiences, the most important one for Karpov was his Candidates semi-final match with Artur Yusupov (London, October 1989). Its outcome seemed predictable: Yusupov always found it hard playing against Karpov, and it was not clear how he would be able to change this tradition. But the match turned out to be very difficult for the ex-champion. As is apparent, what told was fatigue after the battles of the World Cup, and also the fact that Yusupov and his trainer, Mark Dvoretsky, did not stake too much on the World Cup tournaments, and managed to prepare well for the main test and to choose a reliable opening course.

Following the fashion of those years, the match was the best of just eight games, with a new, six-hour time control: 40 moves in two moves, plus 20 in the next hour, and only then adjournment. Apart from Igor Zaitsev and Mikhail Podgaets, Karpov was helped by the American grandmaster Ron Henley – also a sign of the times!

In the 1st game Karpov with Black employed a strong novelty in the Queen’s Indian Defence with 4 g3 Ba6 and obtained a comfortable game – a draw on the 44th move. In the 2nd, after choosing the 4 Qc2 variation against the Nimzo-Indian Defence, he unexpectedly came under a powerful attack, but at the decisive moment Yusupov delayed.



23 ... e4?

The general opinion was that 23 ... Nd3! would have given Black every chance of winning. If 24 Qc3?!, then 24 ... e4! is now good (25 hxg4 fxg4 and wins). 24 Bd5+ Kh8 25 e4 does not help in view of 25 ... Nxc1 26 hxg4 (26 Qxc1 Ne3) 26 ... Nd3 27 Qg3 Nf4 28 Rae1 fxg4 and wins. If 24 Qg3, then 24 ... Nxc1 25 hxg4 (25 Bxg4 Nb3) 25 ... Qxe3+ etc. And after 24 Qe2 Nxc1 25 Rfxc1 Nxe3 26 dxe5 Rxe5 Black has an extra pawn and the initiative.

24 Bd1! (avoiding the unclear variations with 24 hxg4 Nd3 or 24 ... fxg4 25 Qxf2 gxf3) **24 ... Nxd1**

24 ... Nxh3+? 25 gxh3 Qxh3 did not work on account of 26 Ra2! But now the chances are equal.

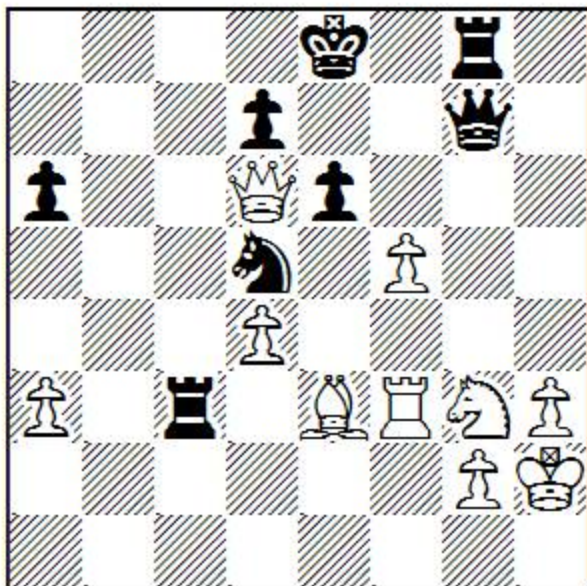
25 Qxd1 Nxe3 26 Qe2 f4 27 Bxe3 fxe3 28 Rxf8+ Rxf8 29 Re1 Rd8 30 d5 c6 31 dxc6 Qxc6 32 Qxe3 Qxc4 33 Qxe4 ½-½

In the 3rd game it was Karpov's turn to employ the Nimzo-Indian Defence. In reply Yusupov chose the sharp Sämisch Variation and boldly sacrificed the exchange. The ex-champion played very strongly, and seized the initiative, but in a fierce time scramble genuine miracles began.

Game 93

A.Yusupov-A.Karpov

Candidates Match, London 1989, 3rd game



36 ... Qe7?

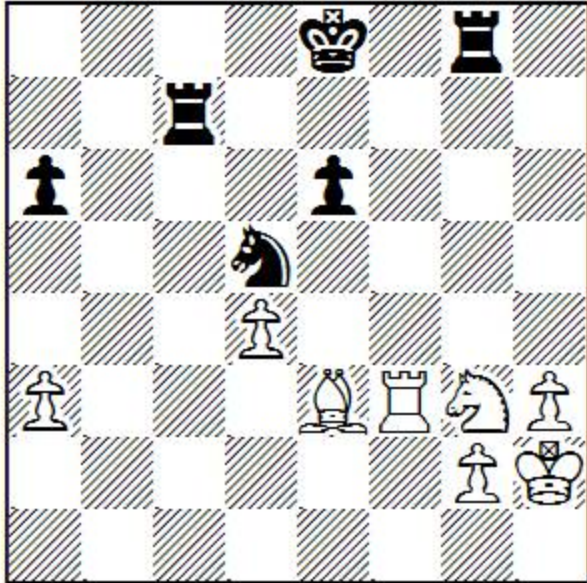
There was a pretty win by 36 ... Rxe3! 37 f6 (37 fxe6 Rxf3) 37 ... Qxg3+! or 37 Qb8+ Kf7! 38 fxe6+ Kxe6 39 Rxe3+ Nxe3 40 Qb3+ Nd5 (Zaitsev).

37 Qb8+ Qd8 38 Qe5 Qc7? (38 ... Qf6 with a draw) 39 Qxc7?

But now it is White who misses a win – 39 f6! Rf8 40 f7+ Kd8 41 Qg7 (Dvoretsky), or 39 ... Qxe5 40 f7+ Kf8 41 fxg8Q+ Kxg8 42 dxe5 Rxe3 43 Rxe3 Nxe3 44 Ne4 Nc4 45 Nf6+ Kf7 46 Nxd7 Nxa3 47 Kg3! etc.

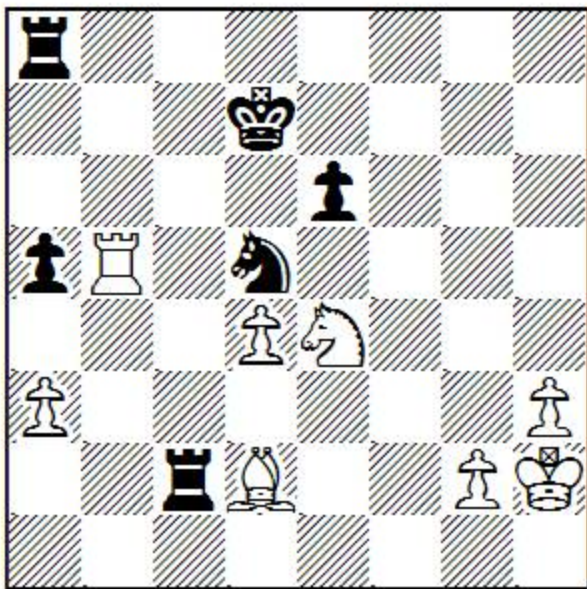
39 ... Rxc7 40 fxe6 dxe6

But not 40 ... Rc3 (Taimanov) 41 Ne4! and wins. A complicated, non-standard ending has arisen. The time control had passed, and whereas in former times the game would have been adjourned, now, by the new rules, play continued until move 60.



41 Ne4 Rc2 42 Bd2 a5 43 Rb3 Kd7 44 Rb5 Ra8?!

'A very strange move, made by Karpov after a long think. During the game Yusupov considered the best winning attempt to be 44 ... Ne3!, although after 45 Nf6+ Kc6 46 Rc5+ Rxc5 47 Nxc6 Nf1+ 48 Kg1 Rc2 49 Bf4 White should be able to hold the position.' (Dvoretsky)



45 a4 Kc6 (45 ... Rc4 was equal – Taimanov) 46 h4! Rc4?! 47 Rc5+ Rxc5
48 dxc5 Nb4

Intending ... Kd5, but now the advantage is on the side of White; his passed g- and h-pawns begin advancing.

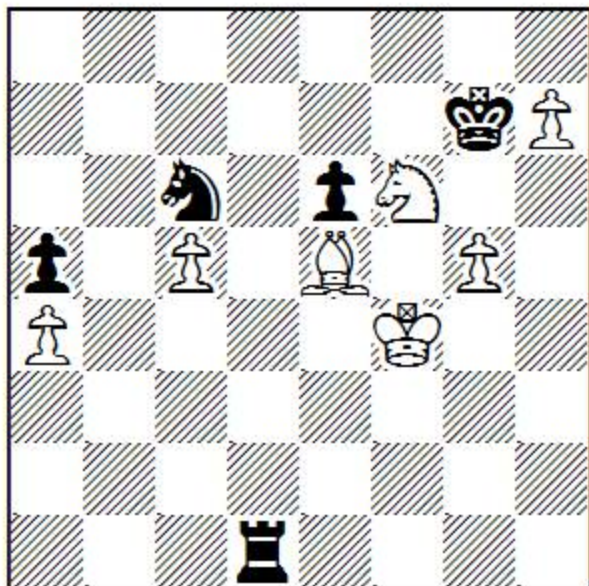
49 h5

'49 g4! Kd5 50 Nf6+ was more accurate, when Black would have had to play 50 ... Kxc5, retaining chances of a draw.' (Dvoretsky)

49 ... Kd5 50 Nf6+ Ke5

After 50 ... Kxc5 51 g4 the king is too far away from the dangerous white pawns. But now too Black has to fight for his survival.

51 Bc3+ Kf4 52 g4 Rd8! 53 h6 Kg5 54 h7 Kg6 55 Kg3 Nc6 56 Kf4 Kg7 57 g5?! (a severe time scramble again interferes; 57 Ke3! was better) 57 ... Rd3 58 Be5 Rd1



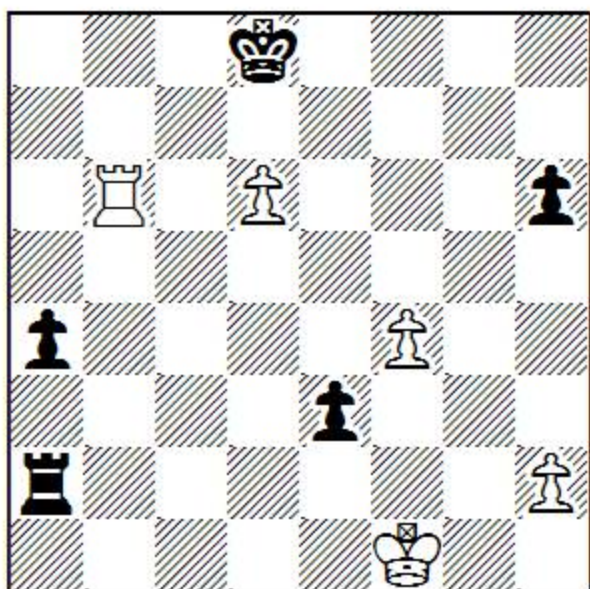
59 g6?? (a nightmarish blunder with the flag about to fall; 59 Bd6 Rh1 would have led to a draw) 59 ... Rf1+ 60 Kg5 Nxe5 61 Nh5+ 0-1

This move was sealed, but White resigned without resuming.

After taking the lead, Karpov avoided the Nimzo-Indian Defence in the 4th game by playing 3 Nf3, but instead of a Queen's Indian Defence Yusupov preferred to go into a Queen's Gambit, where he chose not the then popular Makogonov-Bondarevsky Variation, but the old Lasker Defence. Karpov played uncertainly and conceded the initiative, but it all ended happily for him.

In the 5th game, after playing poorly in a Queen's Pawn Opening, Karpov almost managed to equalise, but in a time scramble Yusupov suddenly made a bold positional sacrifice of a bishop and gained a pretty win. This game was awarded a prize for the best in the two semi-final matches (which were played, incidentally, on the same stage; in the second match Timman defeated Speelman 4½-3½).

After levelling the scores, Yusupov could have built on his success in the 6th game, which proved truly tragic for him. Again the Lasker Defence was played, and again Black seized the initiative, but at the very last moment he missed a certain win.



38 ... a3?

38 ... Rxh2 would have won easily, for example: 39 f5 Rf2+ 40 Ke1 Rxf5, or 39 Ra6 Rf2+ 40 Ke1 Rxf4.

39 Ra6! Rf2+ 40 Ke1 a2 41 f5 Kd7 (or 41 ... Rxh2 42 f6! etc.) 42 f6 Ke6 43 Ra8! Kxd6 44 f7 Rxf7 45 Rxa2 Kc5 46 Ra6 ½-½

When after the match Dvoretsky was asked: 'How do you explain that Yusupov more than once missed a win that seemed altogether close?' the experienced trainer replied:

'A suspicious person would have attributed this to "Dr Zukhar", the role of whom at this match was performed by Igor Akimov, a psychologist and at the same time a journalist, an old helper of Karpov (*and the literary editor of his book 'Sestra moya Kaissa' – G.K.*).

Throughout all the games Akimov sat in the front row of the balcony and stared incessantly at the players, i.e. he behaved as Zukhar once did in Baguio. The normal explanation is simpler: Yusupov expends too much effort on a game, becomes tired and at the decisive moment it can happen that he no longer sees anything. This deficiency of his also told earlier.'

In the 7th game a Queen's Pawn Opening again occurred. On this occasion Karpov successfully solved his problems, but on the 24th and 25th moves he played inaccurately, and White seized the initiative. In the already customary time scramble he won a pawn, but a position with opposite-coloured bishops was reached. A draw was agreed on the 61st move – and the score became $3\frac{1}{2}$ - $3\frac{1}{2}$.

And then, finally, came the 8th game – the last in 'normal time'.

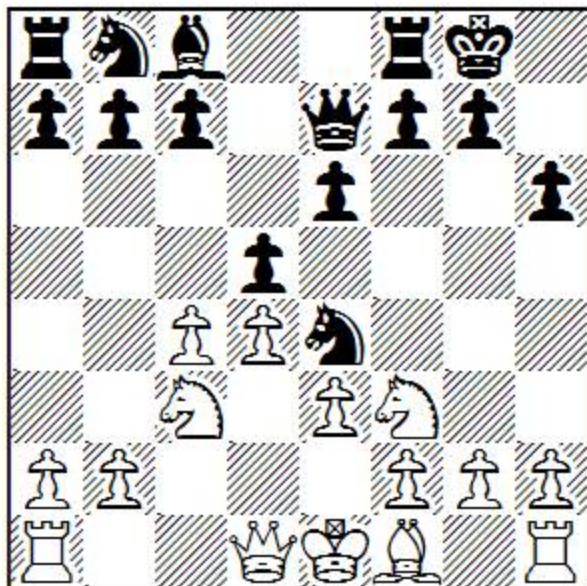
Game 94

A.Karpov-A.Yusupov

Candidates Match, London 1989, 8th game

Queen's Gambit D56

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e6 3 Nf3 d5 4 Nc3 Be7 5 Bg5 0-0 6 e3 h6 7 Bh4 Ne4 8 Bxe7 Qxe7



9 Rc1

On encountering the Lasker Defence for the third time, the ex-champion again makes a different choice. In the 4th game he played 9 Qc2, and in the 6th – 9 cxd5.

9 ... c6 10 Bd3 Nxc3 11 Rxc3 dxc4 12 Bxc4 Nd7 13 0-0 e5

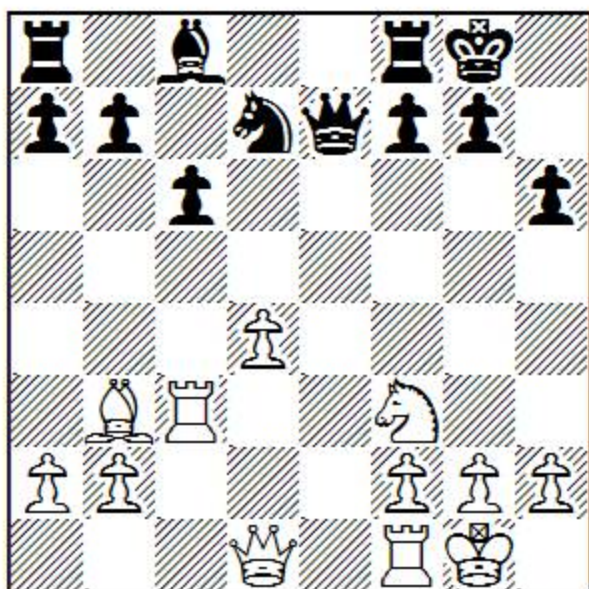
A position from the Capablanca Variation has been reached (6 ... Nbd7 7 Rc1 c6 8 Bd3 dxc4 9 Bxc4 Nd5 10 Bxe7 Qxe7 11 0-0 Nxc3 12 Rxc3 e5), but with the pawn on h6. This is not simply an extra tempo, but also a weakening of the castled position, and for White this gives the chance of an attack!

The alternative is 13 ... b6 14 Bd3 c5. I played this against Smyslov in the 6th game of the final Candidates match (1984) and after 15 Bb5 Rd8 I maintained the balance. Later 15 Be4 Rb8 16 Qc2 or 16 Qa4, which maintain slight pressure, were considered more promising, as, for example, in the games Kramnik-Kasparov (Las Palmas 1996) and Karpov-Yusupov (Dortmund 1997).

14 Bb3 exd4

14 ... Re8, maintaining the pawn tension in the centre, is also quite safe. After 15 d5 cxd5 16 Qxd5 Nf6 several games, beginning with Nikolic-Yusupov (Belgrade 1989), reached one and the same position – 17 Qc5 Ne4 18 Qxe7 Rxe7 19 Rc2 Ng5 – and invariably ended in a draw.

15 exd4



15 ... Nf6?!

A serious inaccuracy. 15 ... Rd8 was correct, as, for example, in the recent game Leitao-Morovic (Brazil 2003). By playing his knight to f8 and erecting in good time a screen at e6, Black safely neutralises the bishop at b3, which otherwise makes the black king very uncomfortable: 16 Re1 Qd6 17 Rce3 Nf8 18 Ne5 Be6 19 Qh5 Bxb3 20 Rxb3 Qc7, and Morovic succeeded in defending everything.

16 Re1 Qd6 17 Ne5 Nd5

17 ... Bf5?, as Benjamin played against me (Horgen 1994), is refuted by 18 Nxf7! I didn't play this, overlooking that after 18 ... Rxf7 19 Bxf7+ Kxf7 20 Qb3+ Kf8 21 Qxb7 Rb8 22 Qxa7 Rxb2 White wins by 23 Rxc6! Qxc6 24 Qa3+ etc.

It was quite possible to radically eliminate the threats to the f7-point by 17 ... Be6 18 Bxe6 fxe6, although the isolated e6- and d4-pawns are not equivalent, and White's position should be preferred – say, after 18 Rg3 (Makarichev).

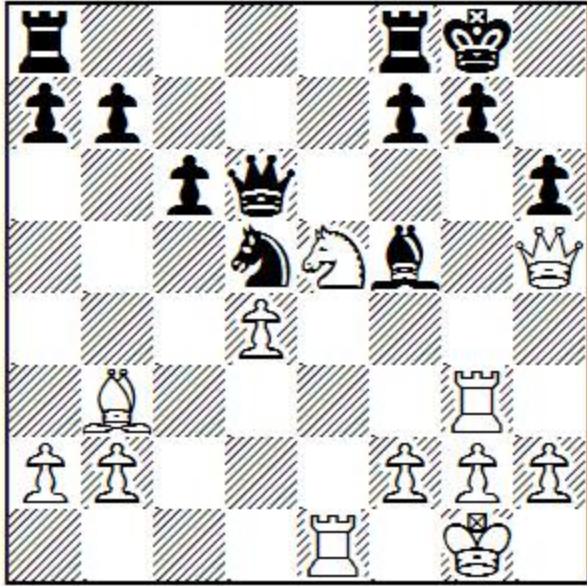
18 Rg3

Now it has become apparent that the h6-pawn, while safeguarding the king against mate threats on the back rank, has itself been transformed into a target for attack.

18 ... Bf5

A questionable decision. 18 ... Be6 19 Qd2 Kh8 was probably better. The rook manoeuvre 20 Re4 Bf5 21 Rh4 does not give anything serious: 21 ... Rae8 (21 ... Bh7? 22 Rhg4 g5 23 Bxd5 Qxd5 24 Rxc5! and wins), and after 22 Rf3 Bg6 23 Bxd5 cxd5 (23 ... Qxd5? 24 Rxc6+) White has to be satisfied merely with the greater activity of his pieces.

19 Qh5



19 ... Bh7?

A serious mistake, after which it is already difficult to save the game. 19 ... Qe6! was necessary, although such a move (into the line of fire of the bishop at b3 and rook at e1) is hard to make. However, there is no direct refutation. In the event of 20 Bxd5 cxd5 21 Nd3 Qf6 22 Rf3 Black has a choice: either 22 ... g6 23 Qxh6 Qxd4 24 Rxf5 Qxd3 25 Rfe5 Qd4 26 h4 Rac8 27 R1e2 with the initiative for White in the heavy piece ending, or 22 ... Bg6 23 Rxf6 Bxh5 24 Rd6 Bg6 25 Nf4 Rfe8! – in this endgame it is hard for White to exploit his advantage.

20 Qg4! g5?

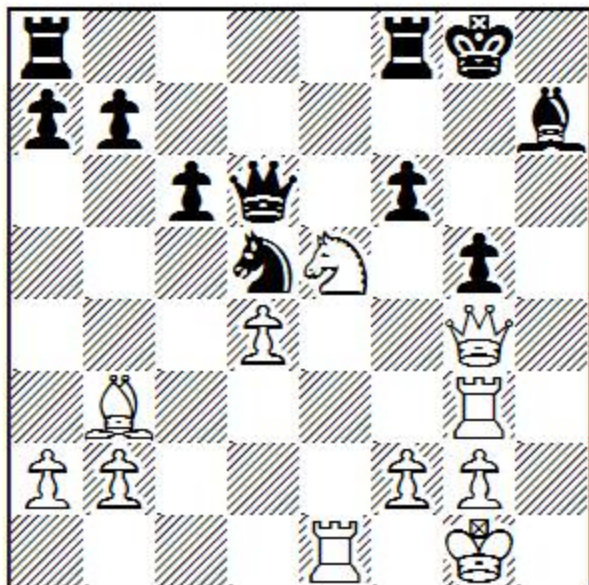
Of course, 20 ... g6 21 h4 (Karpov) does not look very appealing, but now Black loses by force.

21 h4 f6 22 hxg5!

The position is ripe for a decisive assault, and White only needs to choose the correct way. The dashing 22 Qh5 fxe5 23 hxg5 Kg7 24 Bxd5 cxd5 25 Rxe5 was recommended by some commentators, with an attack, but after 23 ... Bg6 24 Qxh6 e4! 25 Rxe4 Rf7 White is in danger of coming to a standstill.

22 ... hxg5

'In the event of 22 ... fxg5 the reply 23 f4! would have only gained in strength.' (Karpov)



23 f4?!

Here, in my view, Karpov missed a forced win – 23 Rh3! This move was suggested along with 23 Qh5 and 23 Nf3 ‘with interesting variations’. Today they are interesting perhaps only for the fact that the computer refutes the human. For example, after 23 Nf3 Kh8 24 Re6 Qd7 25 Nxc5 Rg8 the correct continuation is not 26 Rxf6? (Zaitsev) 26 ... Qxc5 27 Rxc5 Rxc5!, when Black wins, but 26 Rxc6! Qxc5 27 Nf7+, and also in the variation 25 ... fxc5 26 Qxc5 Rg8 27 Qe5+ Rg7 28 Rh6 Qe7 29 Rxc7 Qxc7 30 Bc2 Zaitsev overlooks a computer defence – 30 ... Nf6!

But all these are secondary details, since 23 Rh3! would have given White a decisive advantage:

1) 23 ... fxe5 24 Rxh7! Qf6. In Karpov’s opinion, ‘thanks to this move Black holds on’ (in contrast to 24 ... Kxh7 25 Bc2+), but this is not so – after 25 Rxe5 Qxf2+ 26 Kh2 Qf4+ 27 Qxf4 and Rxb7 it is time for him to resign;

2) 23 ... Qe7 24 Ree3! fxe5 25 Rxe5 Qf7 26 Qxc5+ Qg7 27 Rxd5! cxd5 28 Qxd5+ Kh8 29 Bc2 Rad8 30 Rxh7+! (spectacular, although it is also possible simply to move the queen) 30 ... Qxh7 31 Qe5+ Qg7 32 Qh5+ Kg8 33 Bb3+ Rf7 34 Bxf7+ Kf8 (34 ... Qxf7 35 Qg5+) 35 Qc5+ Kxf7 36 Qc7+. This computer geometry demonstrates that Black is defenceless.

23 ... Rae8?!

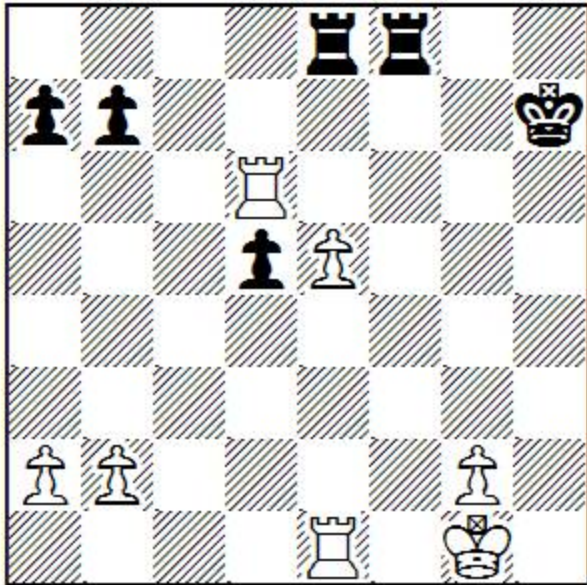
Yusupov misses the chance opportunity and takes play into a lost endgame. 23 ... Kh8 was recommended, in order to obtain a more favourable version of this endgame: 24 fxg5 fxe5 25 g6 Qxg6 26 Qxg6 Bxg6 27 Rxg6 exd4. After this Zaitsev gave an interesting variation with zugzwang in the final position: 28 Re4 Rf7 29 Bxd5 cxd5 30 Rh4+ Rh7 31 Rxd4 Rd8 32 Rg5 Rhd7 33 a3 a6 34 a4 b5 (? – G.K.) 35 axb5 axb5 36 b4 and wins (this variation was also given later by Karpov), but after 34 ... a5 it is unclear whether White has a win.

In my opinion, 24 Bxd5! cxd5 (24 ... Qxd5 25 fxg5! fxe5 26 g6) 25 Nd3 is much stronger, when it is hard for Black to defend, for example: 25 ... Rae8 26 Rxe8 Rxe8 27 fxg5 Rg8 28 Rh3 or 25 ... Rg8 26 Re6 Qd7 27 f5 etc. Even so, 23 ... Kh8 would have given better chances of resisting.

24 fxg5 fxe5

If 24 ... Bf5 Karpov was planning a spectacular queen sacrifice: 25 gxf6+!! Bxg4 26 Rxg4+ Kh8 27 Nf7+ Rxf7 28 Rxe8+ Rf8 29 f7! Nf6 30 Rxf8+ Qxf8 31 Rg8+, transposing into an easily won pawn endgame. And if 29 ... Kh7, then 30 Bc2+ Kh6 31 Rg6+ Qxg6 32 Bxg6 Kg7! 33 g3! (Makarichev) is decisive.

25 g6 Bxg6 26 dxe5! (an important interposition, enabling the extra pawn to be retained) 26 ... Qe6 27 Bxd5 cxd5 28 Qxg6+ Qxg6 29 Rxg6+ Kh7 30 Rd6



The resulting rook endgame merely demands of White a certain technical accuracy.

30 ... Rc8 (30 ... Rd8 31 Rd1!) 31 Re3 Rc2 32 Rd7+ Kg6 33 Rxb7 Re8 (33 ... Rff2? 34 Rg3+ Kh6 35 Rb8 Kh7 36 Rb4! Taimanov) 34 a3 d4 35 Rd3 Rxe5 36 Rxd4 Rg5

36 ... Ree2 37 Rg4+ Kf5 was slightly more tenacious, but even here there are no saving chances: 38 Rgg7 Rxb2 39 Rxb2 Rxb2 40 Rxa7.

Not all of the subsequent moves should have been made, but Yusupov was apparently in a state of shock: this match which had gone so well was lost by him practically without a fight in the final game.

37 Rd6+ Kh5 38 Rh7+ Kg4 39 Rd4+ Kf5 40 Rd5+ Kg6 41 Rg7+ Kxg7 42 Rxg5+ Kf6 43 Rb5 a6 44 Rb6+ Ke7 45 Kh2 Kd7 46 Kh3 Kc7 47 Rb3 Kd6 48 g4 Ke5 49 Kh4 Kf6 50 Rb6+ Kg7 51 Kh5 a5 52 Rb7+ Kg8 53 a4 1-0

Karpov won the match 4½-3½ and went through to the final.

An interesting description of the winner was given in a post-match interview by Mark Dvoretsky:

'I would single out three factors, the combination of which for a long time gave Karpov an appreciable advantage over the leading grandmasters in the world. Firstly, he was always a brilliant intuitive player, he had a splendid feeling for the peculiarities of a position, and he played easily and confidently. Secondly, Karpov is an ideal player, a competitor. Previously he hardly ever lost his head, he knew what to do

and when, where to take a risk; subtly sensing his opponent's condition, he would find the continuations that were most unpleasant for him. Thirdly, in his time the long-standing world champion made use of the services of virtually all the leading grandmasters in the country – and this was of enormous benefit to him in the assimilation of theory.

‘Today the effect of these factors, which strongly distinguished Karpov among other players, has diminished somewhat. He no longer trusts his unique intuition, he spends much time in thought, and he gets into time-trouble. His previously impeccable playing mechanism also does not always operate: now Karpov's decisions are affected sometimes by either fears, or tiredness, or something else. Finally, today the ex-world champion's staff of trainers is considerably reduced.’

Nevertheless, in contrast to certain other stars of that time, which sparkled close to the chess summit and then faded, Karpov's star burned with a powerful light for almost a whole decade more.

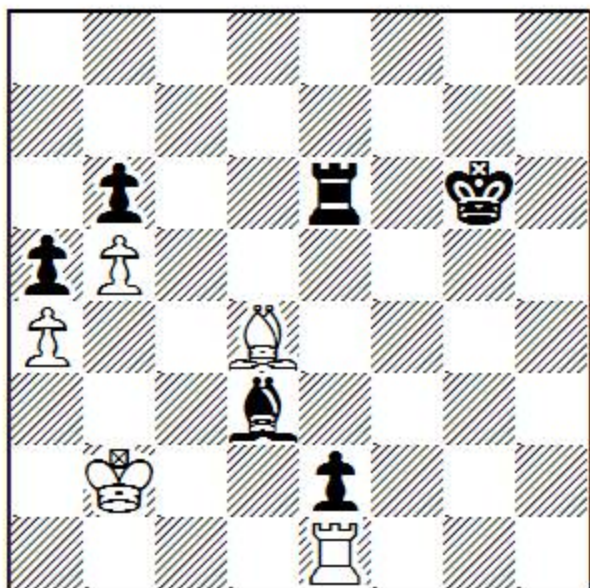
Genre Crisis

After his confident victory over Timman in the final Candidates match (Kuala-Lumpur, March 1990) the ex-champion stated: ‘With time, with age, I have to look for new stimuli for myself, to find the strength that is so necessary for a fight. But in this case I simply want to win against Kasparov.’ And our fifth match for the crown (New York/Lyon, October-December 1990) was, as usual, a tough fight. For some reason Karpov temporarily avoided the Caro-Kann and replied to 1 e4 only with 1 ... e5. Four zeroes in the open games predetermined his overall defeat (11½-12½).

Karpov again had to begin the next qualifying cycle from the Candidates quarter-final match. I well remember how during the drawing of lots, which took place in February 1991 at the opening of the tournament in Linares, he literally shone with happiness when he was paired with the 21-year-old Vishy Anand. For the first time a match opponent of Karpov was young enough to be his son! It seemed improbable that the very talented and promising, but still too young and inexperienced Indian grandmaster would be able to offer serious resistance to such a giant of world chess as Anatoly Karpov. In Linares, incidentally, both of them performed indifferently (there it was another brilliant leader of the new generation who shone – Vasily Ivanchuk).

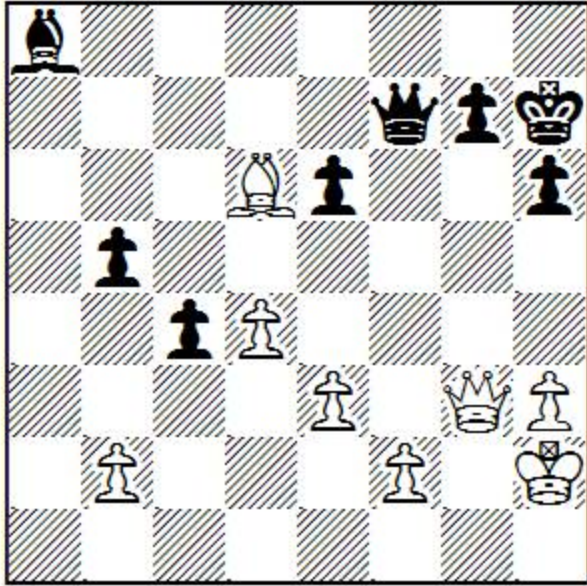
But the match with Anand (Brussels, August 1991) turned out to be even more difficult for Karpov than his match with Yusupov, and it took a very similar course. Possibly he was again affected by the unaccustomed six-hour time control, but more probably it was general psychological tiredness (which later was to cause his downfall in the semi-final with Short). At any event, the parade of mutual mistakes and omissions in the Brussels match broke all conceivable records.

They played to the best of eight games. As in the match with Sokolov four years earlier, the two players contested only two openings – the Caro-Kann Defence and the Meran Variation, prepared by Anand specially for this match. In the 1st game Vishy chose a rare variation against the Caro-Kann (1 e4 c6 2 d3) and was outplayed in quiet manoeuvring. But towards the end of the sixth hour of play, in the time scramble before the second control, Karpov missed a win.



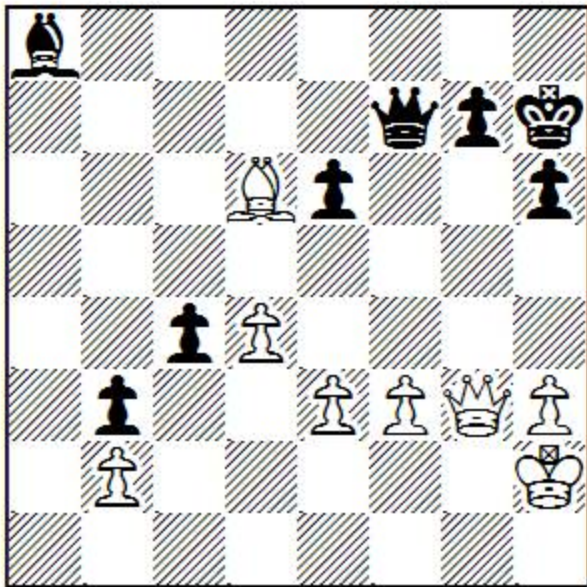
59 ... Bf5? (the simple 59 ... Kf5 and ... Ke4 would have won) 60 Bxb6! Rxb6 61 Rxe2 Rd6 62 Kc3! Rd3+ 63 Kc4 Ra3 64 Kc5 Rxa4 65 b6 Rb4 66 Ra2 Rb1 67 Rxa5 with a draw on the 76th move.

After this the play of both contestants became feverish. In the 2nd game, where for the first time he encountered Anand's 'Meran', the ex-champion played uncertainly in the middlegame and only saved himself literally by a miracle.



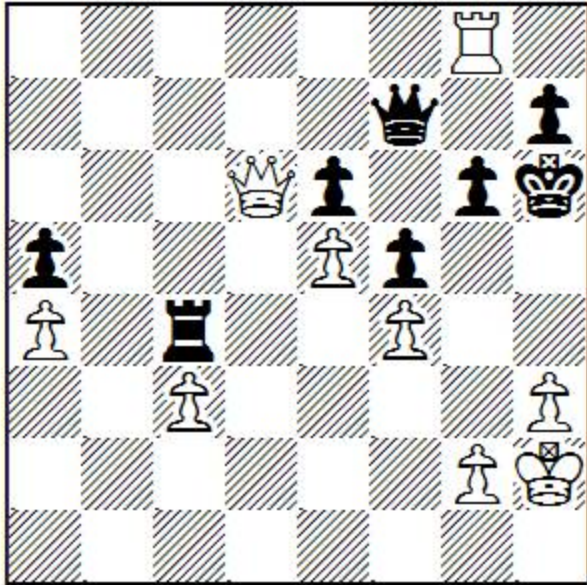
42 ... **b4?! (42 ... Qf5 43 Be5 g5! was simpler – Anand) 43 f3! (the only chance) 43 ... b3?**

Winning a pawn, but allowing White to set up a fortress. According to Anand, 43 ... c3 44 bxc3 b3 45 Ba3 Bxf3 was better, but 43 ... Qb7! was even stronger, with the decisive threat of ... c4-c3.



44 Bb4 Bxf3 45 Qf4 Qb7 46 Bc3 with a draw on the 73rd move.

In the 3rd game, Anand managed to seize the initiative after an unpretentiously played opening and achieve a completely won position. But in his opponent's time-trouble he missed a quick win on the 38th move, and then he altogether allowed him to slip out.

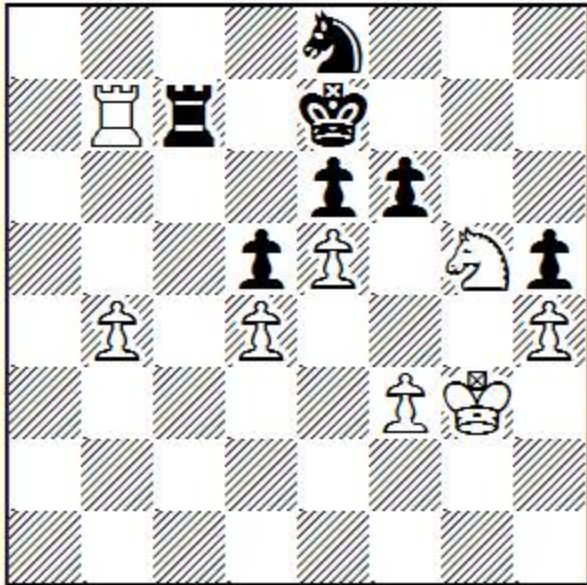


45 Rf8??

The game would have concluded instantly after 45 Qd8! Rxf4 46 g4! with the decisive threat of Qh4 mate.

45 ... Qb7 46 Qd8 (46 Rg8(f6) Qe4 47 Qf8+ Kh5 48 Rxc6 no longer wins in view of 48 ... Qxf4+ 49 Rg3 h6! Anand) **46 ... Qe4 47 Qh4+ Kg7 ½-½**

In the 4th game, as a result of a sharp opening skirmish, Karpov gained an obvious advantage (cf. *Game No.95*, note to White's 10th move) and by accurate play he converted it into a win. It appeared that everything was settled – but that wasn't the case! In the 5th game, against the Caro-Kann Defence, Anand chose the 3 e5 variation, its unhurried version with Nf3 and Be2, which was then coming into fashion. And he completely outplayed his formidable opponent!

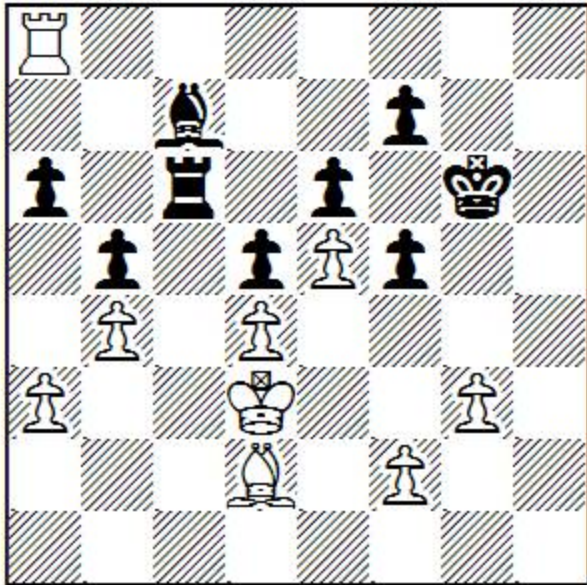


61 exf6+? (the transition into a knight ending would have won easily – 61 Rxc7+ Nxc7 62 Nh7 etc.) 61 ... Kxf6 62 Rb8 Nd6 63 Kf4 Rc1

The sealed move. The adjourned position looks hopeless for Black, but during the resumption Anand blundered on the 74th move, and 20 moves later a draw was agreed.

In the 6th game, as in the 2nd, Karpov again handled a 'Meran' middlegame badly. Anand gained a decisive advantage and after the adjournment he won on the 71st move. But that same day, a little earlier, Vishy missed a win in the adjourned 5th game ... If he had won it, the situation would have been a mirror reflection of Baguio, where Karpov achieved something similar (on the resumption of the 13th and 14th games). What in fact resulted was a 'mirror' of the 1989 match, where by contrast Yusupov, although without any adjournments, won the 5th game and missed a win in the 6th.

At any event, the match score became equal. In the 7th game, again in a quiet Caro-Kann, Anand conducted the middlegame very subtly, obtained a better ending and ... missed yet another chance to take the lead.



41 Rc8? (41 Rg8+! Kh7 42 Rc8 would have placed Black in a very difficult position: 42 ... Kg6 43 Bf4! Rc4 44 Rg8+ Kh7 45 Ra8 Anand) 41 ... f6! 42 Bc3 (if 42 Bf4 or 42 exf6, Black is saved by 42 ... Rc4) 42 ... Kf7 43 exf6 Kxf6 44 Bd2 Rc4 45 Rf8+ Kg6 46 Ra8 Rc6 with a draw on the 63rd move.

Then came the 8th, concluding game – and again the Meran Variation. And again, as in the match with Yusupov, at the decisive moment the ex-champion employed a comparatively fresh idea and achieved the turning point in this extremely difficult encounter.

Game 95

A.Karpov-V.Anand

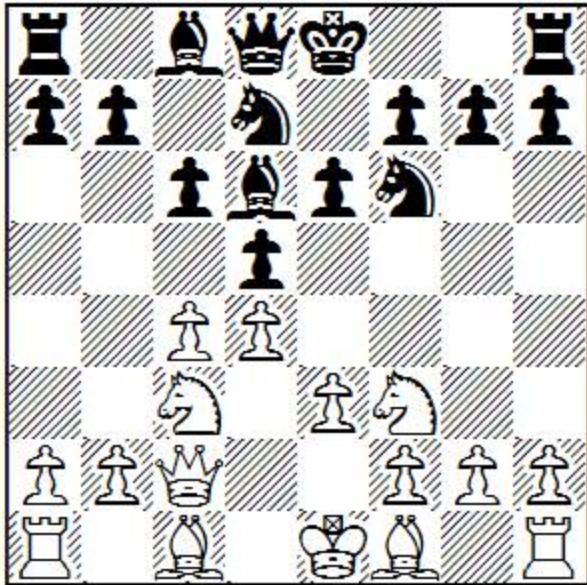
Candidates Match, Brussels 1991, 8th game

Semi-Slav Defence D46

1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 Nf3 Nf6 4 Nc3 e6 5 e3 Nbd7 6 Qc2

Since the 'Meran' was a new opening for Anand, Karpov deliberately avoided the most heavily-analysed line with 6 Bd3 (*Game Nos.80, 103 and 105*) throughout the match; besides, he had already successfully employed 6 Qc2 against Van der Wiel (Tilburg 1988).

6 ... Bd6



7 Be2

Closer to the end of the century Karpov would develop his bishop at d3 – the generally recognised way of fighting for the initiative.

7 ... 0-0 8 0-0 dxc4

With the bishop on e2, relieving the tension in the centre can be delayed. 8 ... b6 is sounder, exploiting the fact that after 9 e4 the double exchange on e4 does not lose a pawn, as in the event of 7 Bd3. In the game Karpov-Kaidanov (Tilburg 1993) 9 ... Nxe4 10 Nxe4 dxe4 11 Qxe4 Bb7 12 Bd3 g6 13 Bh6 Re8 14 Rad1 f5 15 Qe3 c5 led to a roughly equal game.

9 Bxc4 Qe7

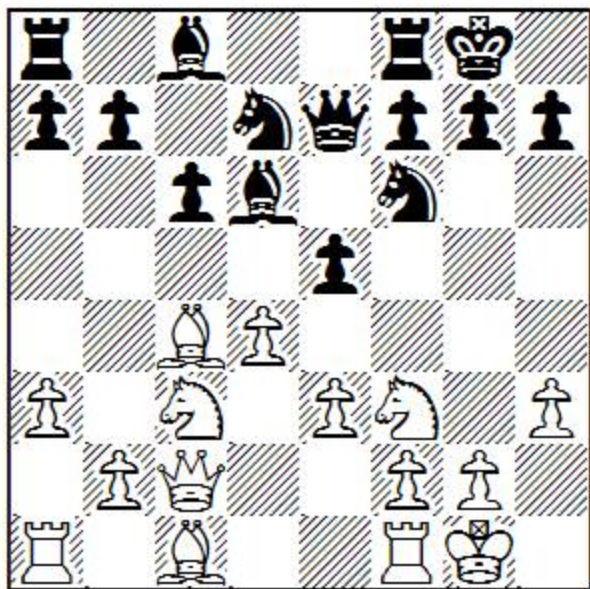
A *tabiya* of the even-numbered games of the match. It was only in the 2nd game that Anand played 9 ... a6 followed by 10 Rd1 Qe7!? 11 h3 b5 12 Bd3 c5 with equality, and in the future it was this move that would be judged the most flexible, enabling Black to retain various options involving both ... b7-b5 (and then ... c6-c5), and also ... e6-e5.

10 a3

Before this Karpov played 10 h3 – and in the 4th game he achieved success after 10 ... a6 11 e4! e5 12 Rd1! b5 13 Bf1 c5 14 d5 c4!? 15 a4 Rb8 16 axb5 axb5 17 Ra5! b4 18 Na4 Qd8 19 Ra7 b3!? 20 Qe2 Nc5 21 Nxc5 Bxc5 22 Ra1! c3! 23 Nxe5! c2 24 Rd3 Qe8? (24 ... Bd7! Spassky) 25 Nc6 Rb6 26 Be3 Nxe4 27 Bxc5 Nxc5 28 Re3 ... 1-0.

But he was apparently dissatisfied with the outcome of the opening in the 6th game, where after 10 ... c5 Anand obtained good play (11 dxc5 Bxc5 12 e4 Bd6 13 Nd4?! Ne5), although later it transpired that this move does not give full equality.

10 ... e5 11 h3



It was for this position that Karpov was aiming (the same could have occurred after 10 h3 e5 11 a3). The modern interpretation of this position is as follows: White has made some useful pawn moves and he now intends to deploy his pieces suitably (Ba2, then perhaps Bd2). The struggle revolves around the pawn tension in the centre, the capture on d4 being unfavourable for Black, since it opens the diagonal for the bishop at c1 and also the e-file for an attack on his queen. Therefore he must also wait, endeavouring to make useful moves, but their choice is restricted. The retreat of the bishop from d6 suggests itself, to reduce the effect of the potential threat Nh4, which becomes pressing if ... h7-h6 is played – but Black needs this move, to impart greater strength to the ... e5-e4 advance (11 ... e4 12 Ng5). It is around such nuances that the opening battle is fought.

11 ... Bc7

At one time the rather artificial 11 ... Bb8 was deemed more subtle. The temporary shutting in of the rook was considered less important than the bishop at c7 being undefended in some variations. In several

games, including some involving Karpov, the set-up 11 ... Bb8 12 Ba2 h6 13 Nh4 Rd8 14 Nf5 Qe8 showed itself to be good. But then it transpired that the natural 11 ... Bc7 also does not spoil anything.

12 Ba2 h6 13 Nh4 Re8

13 ... exd4? is unsuccessful: after 14 Nf5 Qe5 15 f4 Qe8 16 exd4 White dominates, and after 16 ... Nb6? the typical stroke 17 Nxf6+ is decisive. Black could not employ the other set-up 13 ... Rd8 14 Nf5 Qe8 on account of 15 Nb5! It was this nuance that forced attention to be drawn to 11 ... Bb8.

14 Nf5 Qf8 15 Nb5 (15 d5 has also been tried, but without particular success) **15 ... Bb8 16 Bd2!**

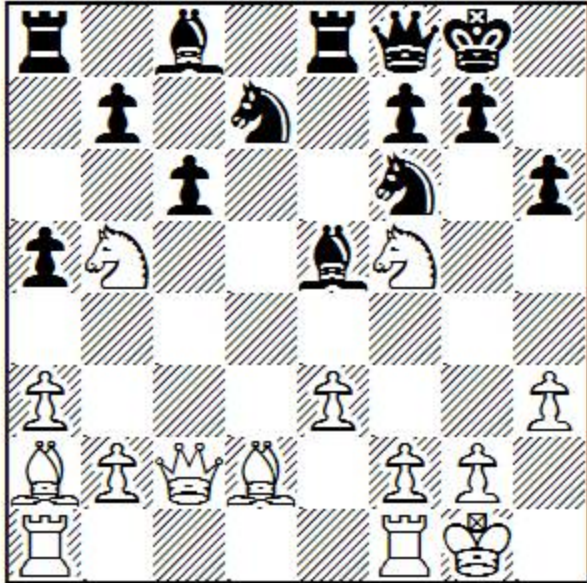
With the threat – no more and no less – of trapping the queen.

16 ... a5

As has already been mentioned, 16 ... exd4 17 exd4 is unfavourable for Black. But now energetic action is demanded of White – all his pieces are hanging, and if he does not exploit the dominating position of the knight at f5, Black will ‘unravel himself’ and will be excellently placed.

17 dxe5 Bxe5?!

An error, although the influence of this move on the outcome of the game was exaggerated. Black had two sensible alternatives: 17 ... Nxe5 18 Nbd4 c5 or even 17 ... Rxe5 18 Nc3 Nc5, driving away the knight from f5 and after 19 Ng3 Re8 20 f4 Ba7 obtaining a complicated position with chances for both sides.



18 f4!

White increases his attacking potential on the kingside. Black cannot be satisfied with 18 ... cxb5? 19 fxe5 Rxe5 (19 ... Nxe5 20 Nxh6+) 20 Bc3 and he is forced to retreat his bishop. Thus White has solved the problem of maintaining his knight at f5.

18 ... Bb8 19 Nc3 Rd8?!

The knight at f5 is too dangerous, and in the first instance Black should have begun a fight against it – 19 ... Nc5!? It is true that he has to reckon with 20 Nxh6+ gxh6 21 Qg6+ Qg7 22 Bxf7+ Kf8 23 Bxe8 Nxe8, but the evaluation of this position is not so obvious. In the endgame – 24 Qxg7+ Kxg7 – Black has nothing to fear (if 25 e4, then 25 ... Nd6 is strong). After 24 Qh5 Ba7 it is certainly better to be playing White, but there is a tense struggle in prospect, in which Black has his counter-chances.

In the event of the preparatory 19 ... Kh8 White has time to transform his weak e3-pawn into a significant attacking piece. The tactical rejoinder 20 e4 Nc5 21 e5 Nfe4 22 Nxh6 gxh6 23 Nxe4 Bf5 provokes a queen sacrifice: 24 Qxc5!? (24 Rae1!? Nxe4 25 Rxe4 Ba7+ 26 Kh1 Bd4 27 Be1! is also promising) 24 ... Ba7 25 Qxa7 Rxa7 26 Nd6 Be6 27 Nxe8 Qxe8 28 Bxe6 fxe6 29 f5 exf5 30 Rxf5 Qd7 31 Rf2 with good material compensation and an attack.

Anand's move pursues the same aim: it prepares ... Nc5, while avoiding Nxh6+. But Karpov finds a drawback to the position of the black rook at d8.

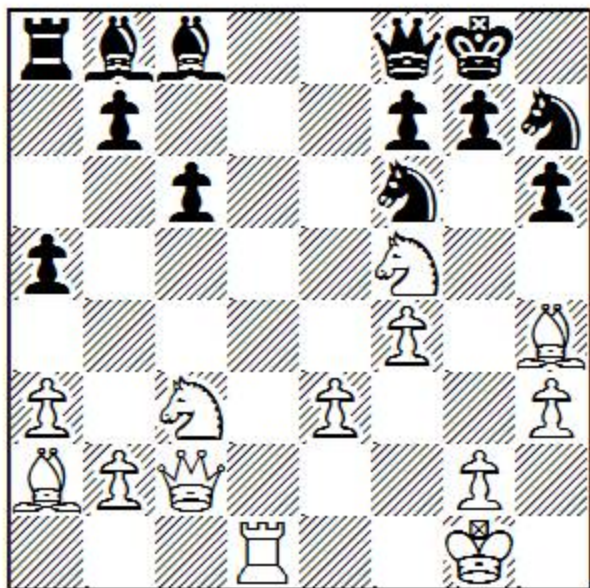
20 Be1! (if 20 ... Nc5, then 21 Bh4 is very strong) 20 ... Nh7 21 Bh4 Ndf6
22 Rad1

White has clearly made progress: he has retained his mobile pawn pair and the powerful bishop at a2 and knight at f5, his other bishop has moved from c1 to an active position at h4, while Black's pieces are huddled on the 8th rank and instead of going to c5 his knight has ended up at h7. And in particular – 23 Nxh6+ is threatened.

22 ... Rxd1

Radical measures with 22 ... Bxf5 23 Qxf5 Ba7 24 Bf2 Qc5? would have given White a probably won endgame after 25 Qxc5 Bxc5 26 e4 Bxf2+ 27 Kxf2 (his bishop is very strong!). But 24 ... b5! would undoubtedly have made things more difficult for him.

23 Rxd1



23 ... Be6??

A blunder, which has more than one refutation! The threat of 24 Nxh6+ gxh6 25 Qg6+ Qg7 26 Rd8+ would have been parried both by 23 ... Bxf5 (with the same idea 24 Qxf5 Ba7 25 Bf2 b5), and 23 ... Bc7, after which nothing forced is apparent. If 24 Ne4, then 24 ... Bxf5 25 Nxh6+ Nxf6 26 Qxf5 Rd8 with mass simplification. And although by 24

Kh1! White would have retained the advantages of his position – say, 24 ... Bxf5 25 Qxf5 Rd8 26 Rf1 etc., there would still have been a tough struggle in prospect.

24 Bxe6 fxe6 25 Qb3

Now the curtain can be lowered. White would also have won with the flamboyant 25 Nxh6+ gxh6 26 Qg6+ Kh8 27 Ne4! Nd5 (27 ... Nxe4 28 Rd7 Qg8 29 Qxe4) 28 Rxd5 exd5 29 Bf6+ Nxf6 30 Nxf6.

25 ... Qe8 26 Nxg7! (Anand's further resistance can be explained only by the fact that this was the last game) **26 ... Qf7 27 Nxe6 Ba7 28 Bf2 Re8 29 Nd4 Qxb3 30 Nxb3 Bxe3 31 Bxe3 Rxe3 32 Nxa5 1-0**

Black resigned, and Karpov won the match – 4½-3½.

Two difficult matches – and two wins in decisive games! An amazing coincidence, wouldn't you agree? But only at first sight. In fact Karpov again displayed his rare fighting qualities in critical situations, showing that he had not forgotten how to win 'to order'.

A month later the ex-world champion performed splendidly in the first – and alas, as it turned out, the last – stage of the second World Cup (Reykjavik, autumn 1991). Only a missed win during the resumption of his last-round game with Chandler (a draw on the 119th move!) denied him clear first place: 1-2. Ivanchuk and Karpov – 10½ out of 15. But soon Vishy also demonstrated his potential, winning a kind of 'USSR super-championship' (Reggio Emilia, 1991/92): 1. Anand – 6 out of 9; 2-3. Gelfand and Kasparov – 5½; 4. Karpov – 5; 5-7. Ivanchuk, Khalifman and Polugayevsky – 4½, etc.

After his match with Anand the 'anti-Meran' variation with 6 Qc2 became firmly established in Karpov's repertoire and brought him several striking wins, gained at a time when the leading grandmasters were only just groping for the correct ways out of this insidious labyrinth. Very characteristic is this game with the 20-year-old Alexei Shirov – another rising star from the end of the 20th century.

Game 96

A.Karpov-A.Shirov

Biel 1992, 13th round

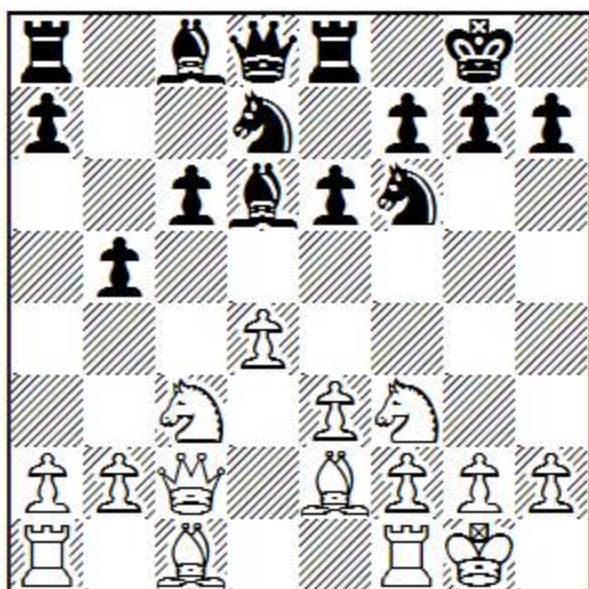
Semi-Slav Defence D46

1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 e3 e6 5 Nf3 Nbd7 6 Qc2 Bd6 7 Be2 0-0 8 0-0 dxc4 9 Bxc4 b5

Seemingly more energetic than 9 ... Qe7 (*Game No.95*), and a typical 'Meran' continuation. The fact that it was chosen by Shirov is not surprising. At that time the theory of this variation was not developed at all.

10 Be2 Re8

Or 10 ... Qc7 11 Bd2 Re8 12 Rac1 with some advantage to White (Karpov-Van der Wiel, Tilburg 1988). 10 ... Bb7 is more natural, but in those years the prevailing opinion was that White's plans should involve e3-e4, and then after ... e6-e5 the black rook will prove well placed (as had already occurred in one of Shirov's games).



11 Rd1 Qc7

Since White has not played the opening very actively, Black can permit himself certain liberties, by employing a hybrid of different variations. Even so, experience has shown that in such a set-up the typical manoeuvre Nc3-e4 enables White to gain the initiative. Incidentally, in the variation 9 ... a6 10 Rd1 Qc7 the move 11 Ne4! was first tried in practice by grandmaster Epishin, one of Karpov's long-standing assistants.

12 b3 e5 13 h3 (defending against 13 ... e4) 13 ... Bb7

Against Tukmakov (Biel Open 1992) Shabalov successfully upheld Black's position after 13 ... a6 14 Bb2 exd4 15 Nxd4 Bb7 16 Nf5 Bf8 17 Nd5 Nxd5 18 Rxd5 Re6. Here 18 ... c5?! is dangerous on account

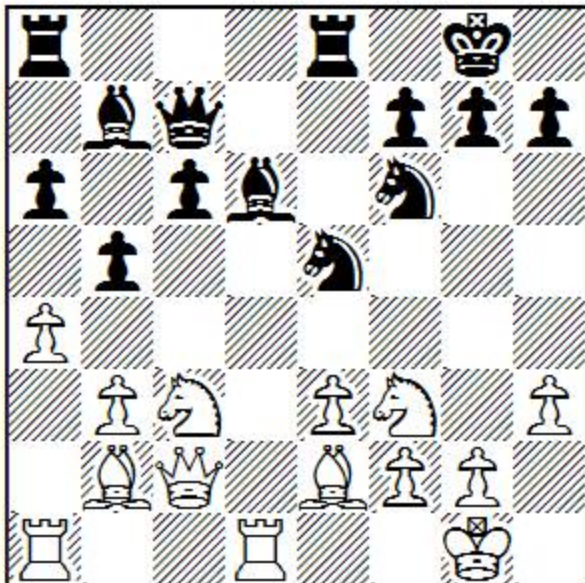
of 19 Nh6+! gxh6 20 Qf5 Bd6 (20 ... Qc6 21 Bd3!) 21 Qg4+ Kf8 22 Qg7+ Ke7 23 Rf5 Rf8 24 Bh5 with an attack.

14 Bb2 a6

Shirov prepares 15 ... exd4 16 Nxd4 c5. The alternative is 14 ... exd4 15 Nxd4 and only then 15 ... a6 (cf. the Tukmakov-Shabalov game). 15 Rxd4!? is interesting, so as after 15 ... Bc5 to reply 16 Rh4 h6 17 Ne4, and if 15 ... Ne5 16 Rad1 Nxf3+ 17 Bxf3 Be5 to sacrifice the exchange: 18 Nxb5! Qb8 19 Nd6 Bxd4 20 Rxd4 with excellent prospects.

15 dxe5 Nxe5 16 a4!

Hindering ... c6-c5 as much as possible, without which the future of the bishop at b7 looks bleak.



16 ... Rad8?

It is hard to call such a natural move a mistake. The immediate 16 ... b4?! 17 Nb1 c5 18 Nbd2 would have given White an enduring positional advantage, thanks to his control of the c4-square and the possibility of an attack on the c5-pawn. The rook move was made in the hope of playing ... b5-b4 at a more convenient moment, but ...

Meanwhile Shirov misses a genuinely convenient moment: after 16 ... Nxf3+! 17 Bxf3 Bh2+ 18 Kh1 Be5 it would have been no longer possible to prevent the freeing advance ... c6-c5.

17 Ng5!

Emphasising that now the knight will establish itself on the key e4-square and, by preventing the ... c6-c5 advance, secure White an enduring positional advantage.

17 ... Qe7 18 Nce4 Nxe4 19 Nxe4 Bb4

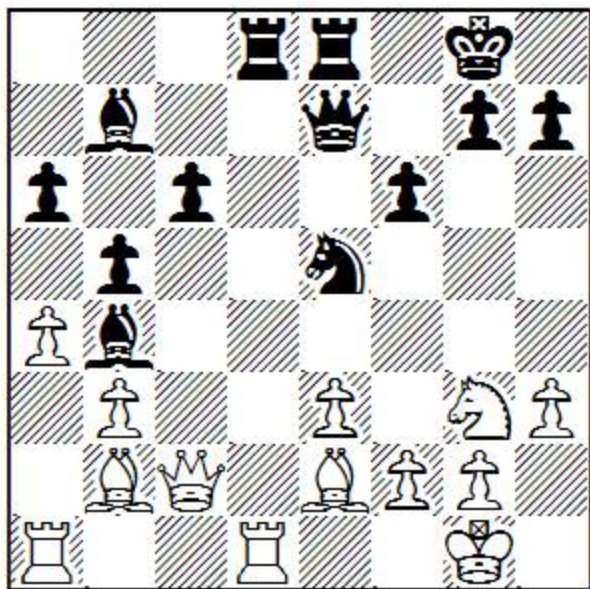
In the event of 19 ... Bc7 White could have advantageously provoked ... b5-b4: 20 Ba3 b4 21 Bb2. Shirov prepares exchanges on the d-file, but Karpov sets him a new problem.

20 Ng3!

How to counter the threat of Nf5 followed by f2-f4? 20 ... g6 suggests itself, but it is not easy to decide on such a weakening of the long dark-squared diagonal with the bishop not at f8, but at b4. And indeed, after 21 Ne4 defending is no simple matter. If 21 ... f5, then 22 f4 Rxd1+ 23 Rxd1 Ng4 24 hxc4 Qxe4 25 Qxe4 fxe4 26 Rd7 Re7 27 Rd8+ Kf7 28 Rh8 Ke6 29 g5! is strong, while after 25 ... Rxe4 26 Be5! Rxe3 27 Rd8+ Kf7 28 Kf1 the bishop at b7 cannot be saved.

20 ... f6

Shirov thought that this was the lesser evil, but now Karpov immediately exploits the weakening of the light squares.



21 Bxe5!

An unexpected exchange, which is justified by concrete calculation. After 21 ... fxe5 (best) 22 Bd3 g6 23 Be4 Black would have faced a cheerless defence, which clearly did not appeal to Shirov.

21 ... Qxe5?! 22 Bd3 (how to defend the h7-pawn?) **22 ... h6?!**

You need to have great courage to decide on **22 ... g6**, allowing **23 Bxg6 hxg6 24 Qxg6+ Kh8** (**24 ... Kf8 25 Nf5** and wins) **25 Qh6+ Kg8 26 Nh5 f5 27 Nf6+ Kf7 28 Nxe8 Rxe8**. Here White has many tempting continuations, for example: **29 Qh7+ Qg7 30 Rd7+ Re7 31 Qxf5+ Qf6** with a choice between retaining the queens, and an endgame where the four connected passed pawns should, of course, ensure a win, but the two black bishops plus the potential passed pawn on the c-file should also not be underestimated.

At the board it is always difficult to solve such problems: the drawbacks to each of the moves are fairly obvious. Shirov, who in this game did not make a single bad move (but a whole series of second-rate ones) preferred not to disrupt the material balance, hoping to survive the opponent's attack on the light squares. But his hopes were not realised: Karpov concludes the game quickly and impressively.

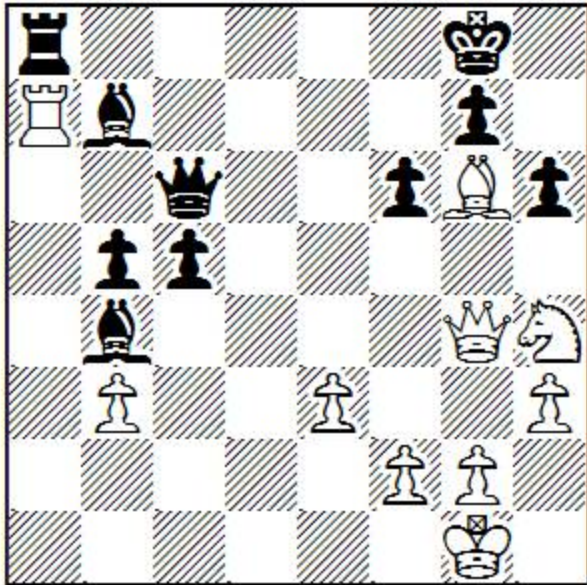
23 Bg6 Rf8 24 Nf5 c5

The other defensive line – **24 ... Qc5 25 Qe4 Bc8** – can also be breached: **26 Rdc1 Bxf5 27 Bxf5 Bc3 28 axb5!** (more accurate than **28 Qg4 Qe5**, and White does not have the winning **Ra7**) **28 ... axb5 29 Qg4 Ra8 30 Rab1!** with a decisive attack with the opposite-coloured bishops. For example: **30 ... Qe5 31 Qg6 Rfd8 32 Qh7+ Kf8 33 Bg6** (or **33 b4** with the idea of playing the bishop to **b3**).

25 axb5 axb5 26 Ra7 Qc7

There is no defence against the combined attack of all the white pieces. After **26 ... Rxd1+ 27 Qxd1 Qc7** there is the decisive **28 Nxb6+ gxh6 29 Be4 Rb8 30 Bxb7 Kf8 31 Qh5 Rxb7 32 Qxh6+ Kg8 33 Qg6+ Kf8 34 Qxf6+ Kg8 35 Ra6**, while if **26 ... Qb8**, then **27 Ne7+ Kh8 28 Bf5!** is deadly – the same motif as in the game: the vacating of the key g6-square for the knight.

27 Nh4 Rxd1+ 28 Qxd1 Ra8 (**28 ... Rd8 29 Qg4 Qd7 30 Rxb7! Qxb7 31 Qe6+ Kh8 32 Bc2**) **29 Qg4! Qc6**



30 Rxb7! Qxb7 31 Qe6+ Kh8 32 Be4 1-0

The conclusion of the light-squared symphony! After 32 ... Ra1+ 33 Kh2 Qb8+ 34 f4 White gives mate.

In 1992 Karpov won three tournaments – in Madrid, Biel and Baden-Baden. However, on the whole this year proved to be one of the most tragic in his career: in the spring in Linares he unexpectedly lost his semi-final Candidates match to Nigel Short: 4-6 (in the other semi-final Yusupov went down by the same score to Timman).

This sensational event provoked a genuine furore in the chess world. The match reviews in the leading chess magazines were littered with garish headlines: 'The end of an era' (*New in Chess*), 'Has the time connection been broken?' (*Chess Herald*), 'End of an era as Westerners oust Russians in World Championship Candidates' (*British Chess Magazine*), 'Downfall of the gods in Linares' (*Schah-Magazin* 64), 'An historic moment – Karpov is knocked out' (*Jaque*), 'Short marks the end of an era' (*Revista Internacional de Ajedrez*) etc.

Hans Ree wrote in *New in Chess*: 'The matches were won by the players with the best time-planning. It was terrible to have to watch Karpov in particular in the appalling time-trouble he was in in nearly every game. And that was not all. His iron nerve seemed to have deserted him. I've seen him in time-trouble before but he always kept his cool. Now he was wriggling with tension, his face wracked with

emotion. His psychologist, Zagainov, was in the front row. The man who should have been exuding tranquillity was biting his nails and wringing his hands, as anguished as his pupil.' Soon a book by Rudolf Zagainov, devoted to this match, was published in Moscow with the symbolic title *Porazhenie* (Defeat).

Also interesting were the observations of Valery Murakhveri, a columnist of the magazine *Chess Herald*:

'Karpov possesses a unique match experience. The magazine *Schah-Magazin 64* counted up that over 18 years he has played 254 games in matches, of which 144 have been against Kasparov. With his subtle knowledge of the psychology and philosophy of matchplay, it appeared that Karpov should not have experienced any difficulties in connection with Short's style and manner of play. It should have been expected that Karpov's superiority in strategically defined positions and the endgame would become the decisive factor in the match, since the opponent would hardly be able to neutralise it, even by imposing a purely tactical battle.

'However, the 14-year age difference proved in this match to be a disadvantage to Karpov. Age manifests itself primarily in an ability to maintain a consistently high competitive standard. Against a background of customary successes, increasingly often there are periods of decline, poor form, and elementary ill-health. With some players this occurs earlier, with others later, but a borderline at the age of 40 can be considered more or less normal.

'The situation around Karpov has also changed: in his team, which used to be so numerous and highly-qualified, for various reasons changes and reductions have occurred. This process, to all appearances, has not been a painless one for Karpov: in the press he expressed his grievances to a whole series of grandmasters for not helping him, and helping his opponents. People who supported or served him faithfully have either departed or lost influence, which also could not fail to affect his fighting spirit.'

My own comment on what had happened was as follows: 'For chess it is beneficial that a player from the West should contend for the highest title. This will significantly raise interest in chess in the media and the general public ... I do not give preference to either of the finalists – Timman or Short, but for chess it would be better if Short were to win. For the public it is more interesting when the challenger is younger than the champion.'

At the time many thought that this was indeed the end of the Karpov era. No one could even suspect how chess history would change in 1993 ...

Against the Queen's Indian

The time has come to divert our attention for a short time from the competitive feats of the 12th world champion and talk about his contribution to the theory of the closed games – or more precisely, to his interpretation of those quiet strategic set-ups which corresponded most fully with his style. As I have already mentioned, Karpov felt very confident in the Queen's Indian Defence – with both colours. It is not surprising that many wins by him with White have become classic games for this opening.

In this respect 1993 was a very bountiful year. At the end of February, at the start of the super-tournament in Linares, that annual 'chess Wimbledon', Karpov was twice successful in the Queen's Indian with 4 g3 – against both 4 ... Bb7 and 4 ... Ba6.

Game 97

A.Karpov-V.Salov

Linares 1993, 1st round

Queen's Indian Defence E18

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e6 3 Nf3 b6 4 g3 Bb7

Salov played Queen's Indian set-ups often and quite successfully, but against Karpov he was pursued by failures. Thus in Linares 1992 he lost to the ex-champion after 4 ... Ba6.

5 Bg2 Be7 6 Nc3 Ne4 7 Bd2 Bf6 8 0-0 (8 Qc2 – Game No.99) 8 ... 0-0 9 Rc1 c5

This is considered a strategically risky line. However, after 9 ... d6 10 d5 Nxd2 11 Qxd2 in the game Karpov-Salov (Reykjavik 1991) White won in a protracted manoeuvring struggle, by exploiting his spatial advantage: 11 ... Qe7 12 e4 Nd7 13 Nd4 Bxd4 14 Qxd4 e5 15 Qd2 a5 16 f4 Nc5 17 f5 f6 18 Bf3 etc. And although during the course of the game Salov had chances of sharpening the situation, he apparently did not like the very character of the play.

10 d5 exd5 11 cxd5 Nxd2 12 Nxd2 d6 13 Nde4!

White establishes his knight in the centre, to exploit its power for the preparation of a pawn offensive on the kingside.

13 ... Be7

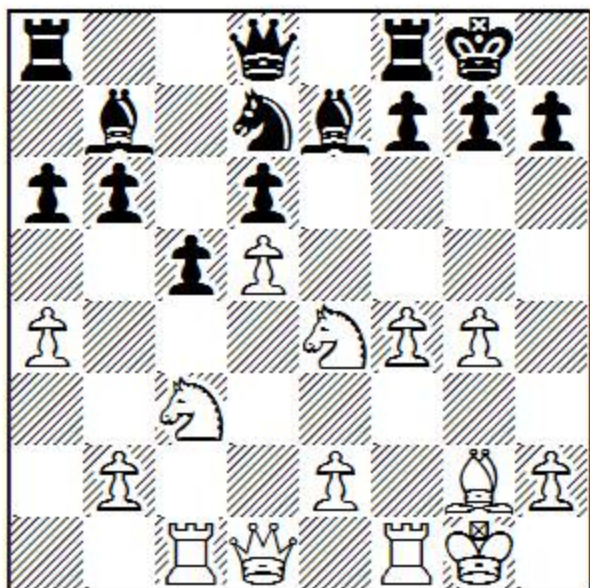
In the game Kasparov-Ligterink (Malta Olympiad 1980) Black made an unsuccessful response – 13 ... Re8?! 14 Qd2 a6, with 15 b4! White

emphasised the lack of harmony in the placing of his pieces, and after 15 ... Be7 16 bxc5 bxc5 17 Qf4 Qc7 18 Na4 Qa5 19 Rb1! Bxd5 20 Nb6 Bxe4 21 Bxe4 Ra7 he landed a decisive blow – 22 Nc8!

Salov should have been better prepared. In retreating his bishop, he was obviously hoping that the two bishops would allow him to create counterplay by the advance of his queenside pawns.

14 f4 Nd7 15 g4! a6 16 a4

Not allowing an immediate ... b6-b5.



16 ... Re8?

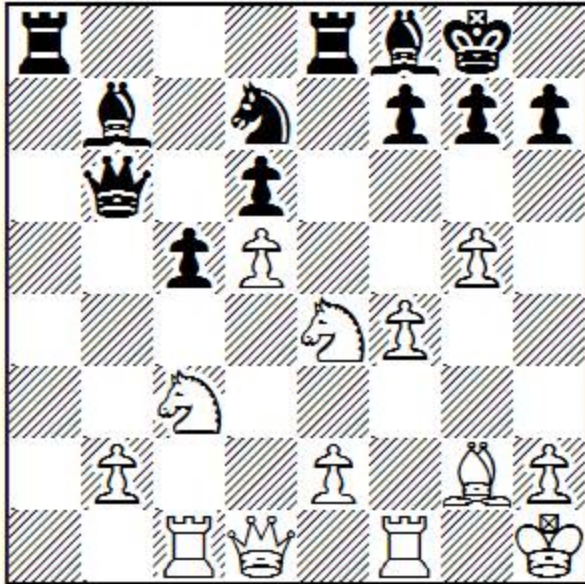
Too calm an attitude to the positional threat of g4-g5, gaining space and with the real prospect of an attack. If Black wanted to play ... b6-b5, it was better to do this immediately – 16 ... b5 17 axb5 axb5 18 Nxb5 Qb6, although after 19 Nbc3 he hardly has sufficient compensation for the pawn. However, Black is not yet obliged to go in for such extreme measures – for example, the simple 16 ... h6 is possible.

But the most interesting move is 16 ... Nf6. After 17 Nf2 the reply 17 ... h6 18 h4 g5?! is excessively risky on account of 19 hxg5 hxg5 20 e3, and the weakening of the kingside may prove critical. It is safer to return – 17 ... Nd7, in order after 18 g5 to play the timely 18 ... f6, and if 18 Qc2 to mechanically prevent the advance of the white pawns – 18 ... h6.

17 g5 Bf8 18 Kh1 b5

It is probable that Salov decided on this with a heavy heart, but there is no other way of creating counterplay.

19 axb5 axb5 20 Nxb5 Qb6 21 Nbc3



Black's activity on the queenside is aimed merely at diverting White's attention from the kingside. However, even if should succeed in winning the b2-pawn, this will only signify the restoring of material equality, and not at all the creation of real counterplay.

21 ... Qb4

Black prevents an increase in the attacking potential after Rf3-h3, but now the white queen heads there, and things become even more difficult for him.

22 Qd3 Nb6 23 Qg3! Kh8 24 Rcd1

White has an extra pawn, well placed pieces and the prospect of a direct attack on the king, whereas the opponent's counterplay is illusory – all the indications are that Black has completely lost the battle.

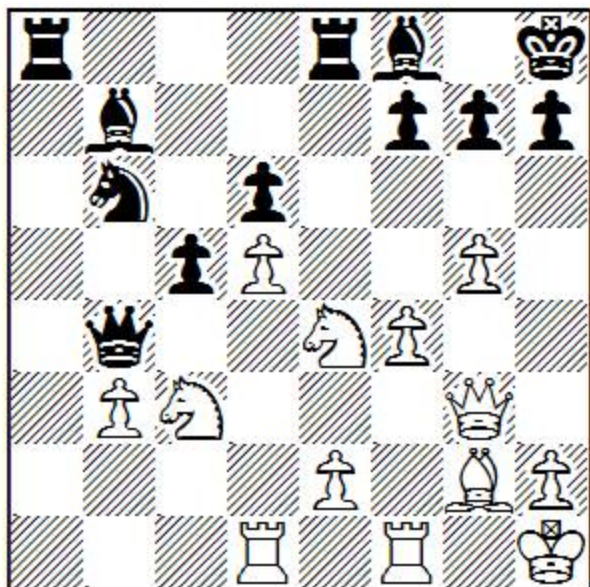
24 ... Nc4

It was possible to eliminate the b2-pawn and even create the semblance of a counterattack – 24 ... Na4 25 f5 Nxb2 26 Rb1 Ra3, but after 27 Rf4 c4 28 Rh4 White would have begun a decisive assault: 28 ... Rxe4 29 Rxe4 Rxc3 30 Re8 Kg8 31 Qh4, and there is no defence against 32 g6. It is also not possible to restrain the advance of the

pawns: 24 ... Bc8 25 f5 Re5 26 g6! Bxf5 27 Ng5! Bxg6 28 Nxf7+ Bxf7 29 Rxf7 followed by playing the bishop from g2 to e6.

25 b3! Nb6

The knight is forced to return empty-handed. In the event of 25 ... Qxb3 26 Rb1 Nb2 White has a pleasant choice between continuing the attack (27 f5) and winning material – 27 Rfd1 etc.



26 g6!

The most energetic – ‘Sicilian style’ – development of the attack. White would also have won after 26 f5 Ra3 27 g6 f6 28 gxh7 Rxb3? 29 Qg6, and although 28 ... Nd7 enables Black to resist somehow, after 29 Nxd6 he is unable to hold out.

White’s position is so strong that one can observe a rare instance in the practice of the great pragmatist Karpov: he rejects gain of material in favour of a direct attack!

26 ... fxg6 27 f5 gxf5 28 Rxf5 Nd7 29 Rdf1

29 Nxd6 Bxd6 30 Qxd6 Nf8 (or 30 ... Qxc3 31 Qxd7 Ba6 32 Rdf1) 31 Qg3 was also possible, but Karpov no longer wants to deviate from his general plan of concentrating pieces in the vicinity of the black king.

29 ... Ne5 30 R5f4 Qb6 (it is also bad to play 30 ... Ng6 31 Rg4 – with the threat of Rxg6 – 31 ... Ne5 32 Rh4) **31 Ng5 Ng6**

This allows an elegant conclusion. But otherwise the white bishop joins the attack with decisive effect: 31 ... Be7 32 Nf7+ Nxf7 33 Rxf7

Bf8 34 Be4!, or 31 ... g6 32 Rh4 h5 33 Nf7+ Kg7 34 Be4.

32 Nf7+ Kg8 33 Qxg6! 1-0

In view of 33 ... hxg6 34 Rh4.

In the 2nd round the ex-champion lost to Timman, but this did nothing to cool his fighting spirit.

Game 98

A.Karpov-A.Beliavsky

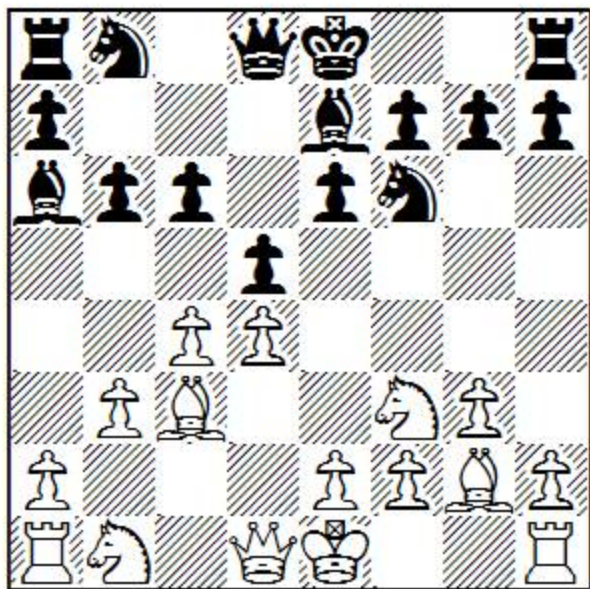
Linares 1993, 3rd round

Queen's Indian Defence E15

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e6 3 Nf3 b6 4 g3 Ba6 (4 ... Bb7 – *Game Nos.97 and 99*) 5 b3 Bb4+

5 ... b5 is questionable – a month earlier in Wijk aan Zee Karpov twice defeated Christiansen after 6 cxb5 Bxb5 7 Bg2 Bb4+ 8 Bd2 a5 9 0-0 (and, incidentally, he won that knock-out tournament).

6 Bd2 Be7 7 Bg2 (7 Nc3 – *Game Nos.90 and 91*) 7 ... c6 8 Bc3 d5



9 Ne5 Nfd7 10 Nxd7 Nxd7 11 Nd2 0-0 12 0-0

One of those variations that Karpov employed with both colours.

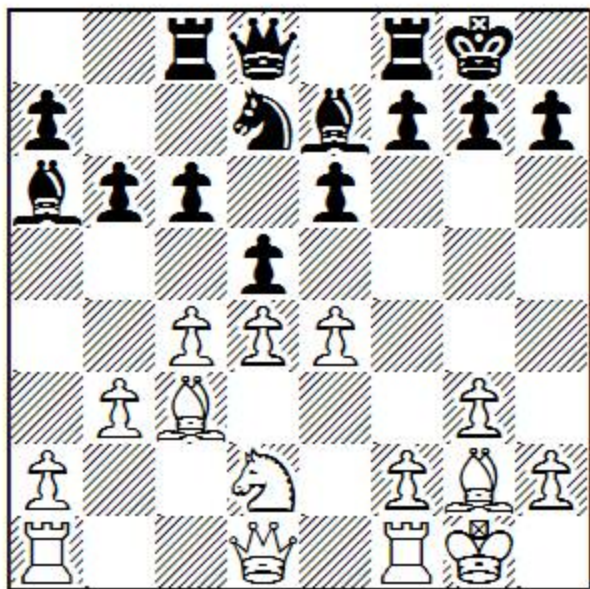
12 ... Rc8

The flexible move 12 ... Nf6 is also popular, and it has occurred many times in his games, for example: Karpov-Portisch (Rotterdam

1989), or Yusupov-Karpov (1st matchgame, London 1989).

13 e4

A position has been reached from the memorable 6th game of our first match (1984/85), where I was White, and from the 21st game of the return match (1986), where Karpov was White.



13 ... c5

Another idea of the Hungarian players. The earlier continuation – 13 ... b5 14 Re1 dxc4 15 bxc4, which was tested in the aforementioned matches, is still topical in the 21st century (I should mention the game Bologan-Kramnik, Dortmund 2004).

14 exd5 exd5 15 dxc5 dxc4 16 c6 cxb3 17 Re1 Bb5

A sound enough reply, but today 17 ... b2 18 Bxb2 Nc5 is considered best (a recent example: Topalov-Anand, FIDE World Championship, San Luis 2005).

18 axb3!

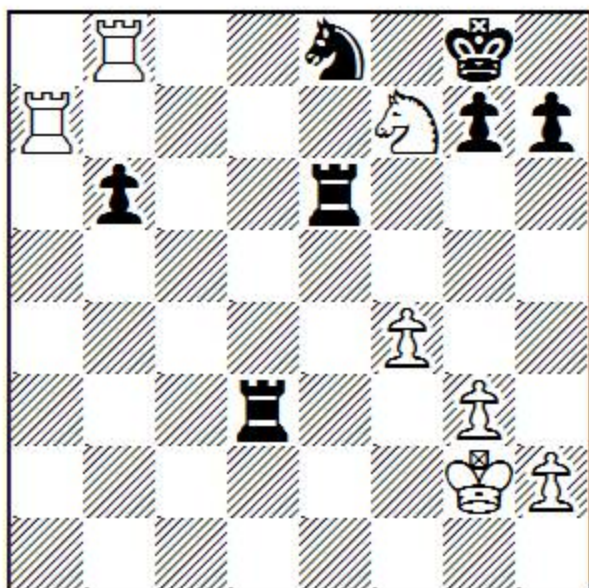
At one time they used to play 18 Nxb3 and it was thought that Black had no problems in equalising. A model example was provided by the attractive drawn game Yusupov-Sax (Rotterdam 1989): 18 ... Bxc6 19 Bxg7 Kxg7 20 Nd4 Bxg2 21 Nf5+ Kh8 22 Rxe7 Bh3 23 Qd4+ Ne5 24 Qxe5+ f6 25 Qe2 Bxf5 26 Rd1 Bg4.

18 ... Bc6 19 Bxc6 Rxc6 20 Rxa7!

It turns out that this promises White some initiative, since 20 ... Rxc3? fails to the paradoxical retreat 21 Nb1!, gaining material: 21 ... Rc7 22 Rxc7 Qxc7 23 Rxe7 Rd8 24 Qd5! Qc1+ (24 ... Rf8? 25 Rxd7 Qc1+ 26 Qd1) 25 Kg2 Rf8 26 Rxd7 Qxb1 27 Rd6! b5 28 Rb6, winning the b-pawn.

20 ... Bf6

In the colourful game Karpov-Korchnoi (Tilburg 1991) after 20 ... Nf6 21 Qf3 Qd5? (21 ... Rc7 is better) 22 Rxe7 Qxf3 23 Nxf3 Rxc3 24 Ng5 White gained a strong attack, despite the exchange of queens: 24 ... Rxb3 25 Nxf7 Re8 26 Reb7 Re1+ 27 Kg2 Ne8 28 Rb8 (threatening Nd6) 28 ... Rd3 (not 28 ... Re6? 29 Nd6 Kf8 30 Rf7+ etc.) 29 f4 (intending Ne5; 29 Rxb6 Rd2! and ... Ree2) 29 ... Re6.



Analysis diagram

30 h4? (a time-trouble mistake – 30 Kh3 Rde3 31 Ng5 Re7 32 Rxe7 Rxe7 33 Rxb6 would have retained good winning chances) 30 ... Re2+ 31 Kh3 h5! (by giving up a piece, Black weaves a mating net, from which White can escape only at the cost of perpetual check) 32 Ne5 Rd1! 33 Rxe8+ Kh7 34 g4 Re3+ 35 Kg2 Rd2+ 36 Kf1 Rh3 37 Kg1 Rg3+ 38 Kf1 Rh3 39 Kg1 Rg3+ 40 Kf1 Rh3 $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$.

20 ... Bf6 is more solid, since the bishop at e7 and Black's other pieces occupy passive positions and are subject to attacks.

21 Nc4

21 Ne4 has also been tried, although after 21 ... Bxc3 22 Rxd7 Qa8 Black has usually maintained the balance.

21 ... Nc5

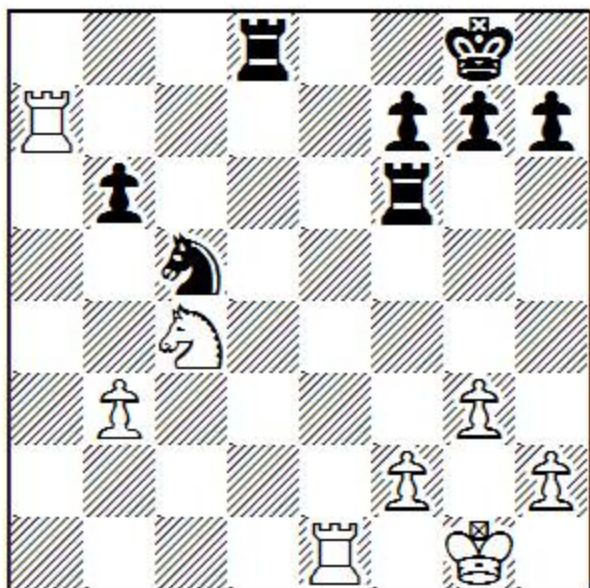
It is interesting that in the 16th game of his match with Kamsky (Elista 1996), when the outcome was already practically decided, Karpov played this variation as Black and replied with 21 ... Bxc3 here. But after 22 Rxd7 Qf6 23 Re4 he overlooked an elementary tactical stroke – 23 ... Qf5? 24 Rf4 Qe6 25 Rdx7!, based on the lack of an escape square for the black king. If he had concerned himself with this by playing 23 ... h6, equality would still have been achievable.

22 Qxd8 Rxd8

22 ... Bxd8 would have allowed White to retain very strong pressure in the endgame by 23 Bb4 Bc7 24 Rd1.

23 Bxf6 Rxf6?

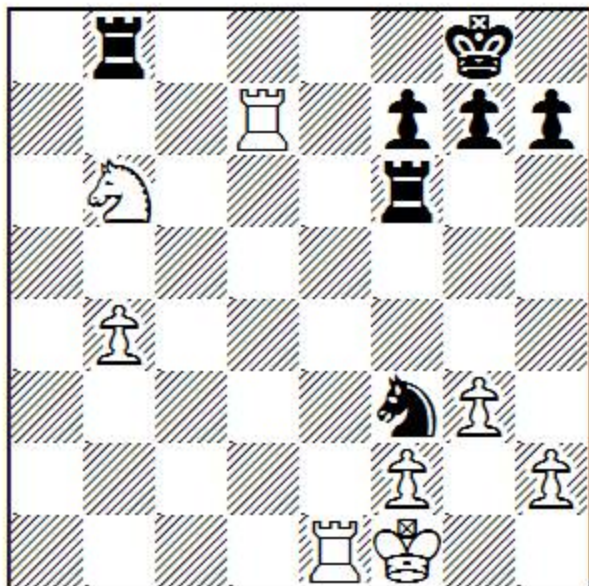
After the match with Kamsky, in the game Van Wely-Karpov (Cap d'Agde rapidplay 1996) 23 ... gxf6! was played, and 24 Ne3 Nxb3 25 Nf5 Rc1 led in the end to a draw. In the event of 24 Ree7 Nxb3 25 Ne3 Rf8 26 Nf5 Black has the strong move 26 ... h5!, freeing his king and neutralising White's threat of 27 Nh6+ Kg7 28 Nxf7 Kg6, when he has nothing to fear.



24 b4! Ne6?!

It turns out that the knight has no good square. The lesser evil was to go into a rook ending a pawn down: 24 ... b5 (24 ... Na4, with the same aim, does not work, since instead of 25 Rxa4 White has the strong 25 Rd7! Rf8 26 Re5 with a great advantage) 25 bxc5 bxc4 26 Ra4 Rc6 27 Rxc4 – the presence of all four rooks leaves Black hopes of saving the game.

25 Nxb6 Ng5 26 Rd7! Nf3+ 27 Kf1 Rb8



28 Red1

Skilfully combining attacking operations with his small army and the threat of transposing into a technically won endgame, Karpov accurately converts his advantage.

28 ... Kf8 29 Nd5 Re6 30 Nc7 Rh6 31 h4 g5 32 hxg5 Nxc5

After 32 ... Rh1+ 33 Kg2 Rxd1 34 Rxd1 Nxc5 35 Rd5 Ne6 36 Rb5 Black has a choice between several lost endings.

33 R1d5! Ne4 34 Rd8+ Rxd8 35 Rxd8+ Kg7 (the rook ending after 35 ... Ke7 36 Re8+ Kd7 37 Rxe4 Kxc7 38 Rf4 is completely hopeless) **36 Ne8+ Kg6 37 Kg2 f6 38 Rd7 Rh5 39 Rg7+ Kh6 40 Re7 f5 41 Re6+ Kg5 1-0**

And in view of the obvious 42 f4+ Kg4 43 Rxe4 Black resigned.

I should remind you that by this time Short had won the final Candidates match against Timman (6½-4½) and had suggested to me that with one sweep we should sever the mass of problems that had accumulated in the negotiations with Campomanes: to contest the

world championship outside of the framework of FIDE! Deciding that this was a convenient moment finally to place chess on a professional basis, I agreed. And on 26th February, at the height of the battles in Linares, Short and I made an unexpected statement, which had far-reaching consequences for the chess world: about the fact that 'Garry Kasparov and Nigel Short have agreed to play their match outside the jurisdiction of FIDE. The match will be played under the auspices of a new body, The Professional Chess Association ... which is intended to represent chess professionals worldwide and work for the good of the game.'

But the super-tournament continued to run its course. After eight rounds Anand was leading, half a point ahead of Karpov and me. But in the 9th and 10th rounds I managed to win with White against Anand and with Black against Karpov (the Sämisch Variation in the King's Indian Defence – this was our 162nd encounter!), which decided the outcome of the event as a whole: 1. Kasparov – 10 out of 13; 2-3. Anand and Karpov – $8\frac{1}{2}$; 4. Shirov – 8; 5. Kramnik – $7\frac{1}{2}$; 6-7. Ivanchuk and Salov – $6\frac{1}{2}$; 8. Beliavsky – 6, etc.

Within a week, on 23rd March, without further ado the FIDE management deprived Short and I of the rights of champion and challenger – and at the same time offered the right to play a 'match for the world championship' to the two reserve candidates, the losers in the qualifying cycle, Timman and Karpov!

This sudden chance to regain the crown, even if only the FIDE version of it, literally reanimated and transformed the ex-champion. In April and July Karpov won tournaments in Dos Hermanas and Dortmund, and in the autumn, while I was beating Short, he did not allow any chances to Timman, who maintained an equal score only for the first five games ...

After gaining the title of FIDE world champion, in November he won his seventh(!) tournament in Tilburg, held on the then fashionable knock-out system. In mini-matches he overcame, one after another, Romanishin, Vyzhmanavin, Kaidanov (both on a tie-break), Yusupov, Beliavsky and, again on a tie-break, Ivanchuk.

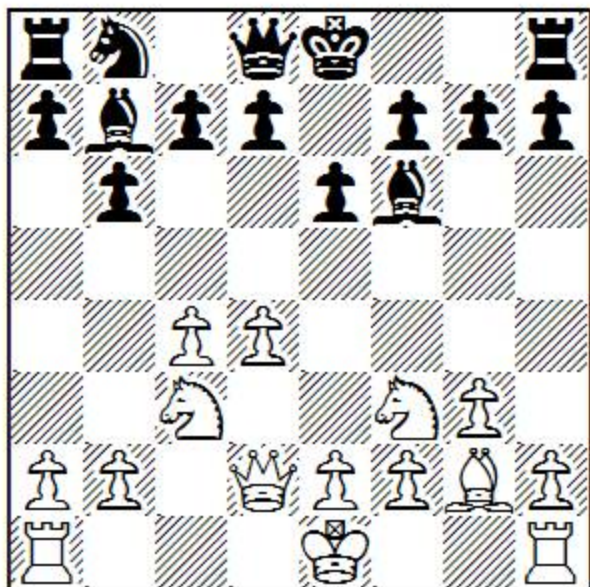
Here the Queen's Indian theme was continued by the following game, in which Karpov played the early middlegame in very interesting fashion.

A.Karpov-A.Yusupov

Tilburg 1993, 5th round

Queen's Indian Defence E17

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e6 3 Nf3 b6 4 g3 Bb7 5 Bg2 Be7 6 Nc3 Ne4 7 Bd2 Bf6 8 Qc2!? (8 0-0 – *Game No.97*) 8 ... Nxd2 9 Qxd2



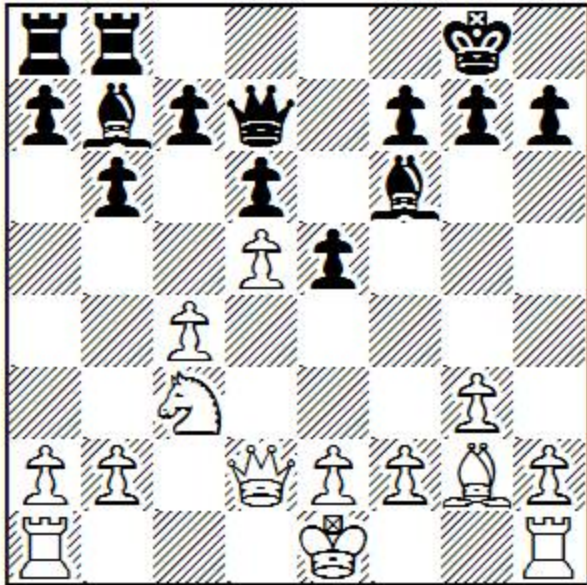
A typical position: Black has the two bishops, while White dominates the centre and controls more space.

9 ... d6 10 d5 0-0 11 Nd4!

Inviting the capture on d4 – this leads to a position similar to the aforementioned Karpov-Salov game (Reykjavik 1991 – cf. *Game No.97*, note to Black's 9th move). Yusupov prefers to retain his bishop.

11 ... e5 12 Nc6 Qd7 13 Nxb8 Rfxb8

It would appear that Black has no reason for complaint. In the event of 14 0-0 he can develop his bishop at g7 and prepare ... f7-f5, and countering this with f2-f4 will lead to the activation of the dark-squared bishop, which has no opponent.



14 h4!

Unexpected and strong. White not only seizes space on the kingside (after ... g7-g6 the attack h4-h5 is possible), but primarily he prepares to bring out his bishop to h3. Its role there is very important, and its exchange after ... Bb7-c8 is advantageous to White, since the weakening of the opponent's light squares will be more keenly felt.

14 ... a5?!

A routine move for positions of this type, where White usually prepares a pawn offensive on the queenside. Yusupov either did not anticipate what happened next, or else he overestimated the solidity of his defences.

14 ... a6 would have enabled Black to hope for counterplay. Of course, White has not yet castled long and after 15 Bh3 Qe8 16 Ne4 he could have castled on the kingside. But with this development of events Black would have retained more possibilities than in the game.

15 a4!

Karpov stabilises the situation on the queenside, in order to begin aggressive action on the kingside.

15 ... Rf8 16 e4 h5 (if 16 ... g6, then 17 h5 is unpleasant) **17 0-0-0!**

White reveals his cards. His king is completely safe: due to the nature of the pawn structure on the queenside, Black cannot hope to make any undermining pawn moves or pawn storms.

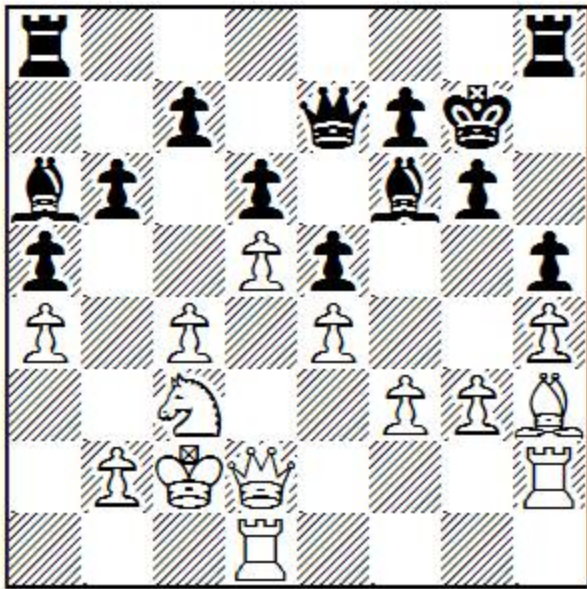
17 ... g6 18 Bh3 Qe7 19 Kc2

Manoeuvring begins, in a situation where White has more space and possibilities of strengthening his position.

19 ... Kg7?!

A consistent defensive course. If 19 ... Bg7, then 20 g4 hxg4 21 Bxg4 f5 22 Bf3 looks strong, but after the queen sacrifice 20 ... Qxh4! 21 gxh5 Qxh5 22 Bc8 Qxd1+ 23 Qxd1 Bxc8 (24 Nb5 Bd7) the question arises: can White win here?

20 f3 Rh8 21 Rh2 Ba6



22 Nb5! Raf8

White is not afraid of the exchange 22 ... Bxb5 23 cxb5!, leaving opposite-coloured bishops on the board. Of course, Black will defend his c7-pawn with his bishop from d8, but sooner or later White will advantageously advance f3-f4. However, Karpov sets about preparing this breakthrough even without the exchange on b5.

23 Kb1 Qd8 24 Qd3 Be7 25 Re2 Bc8?!

Yusupov became tired of waiting and decided nevertheless to exchange bishops, but possibly he should not have done this. Now White has a very easy game, and his knight has gained the opportunity to break through to c6.

26 Bxc8 Qxc8 27 Rg1 Bd8

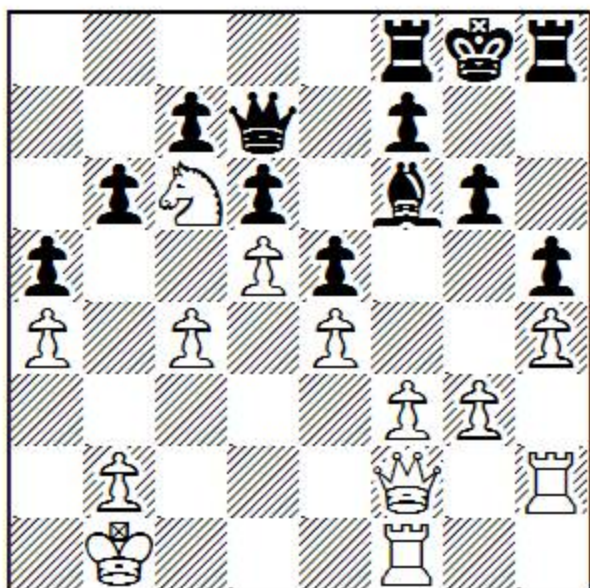
This passivity is forced: 27 ... f5? 28 f4 would have quickly led to insoluble problems.

28 Na7 Qh3 29 Qc2 Re8 30 Nc6 Bf6 31 Rf2 Qd7 32 Qe2 Rhf8 33 Rh2

Preparing a favourable moment for g3-g4 or f3-f4. Karpov maintains the tension, realising that it is not easy for Black to guess his opponent's intentions. And indeed, fearing both of these breakthroughs, Yusupov was unable to find a way out of his difficult position.

33 ... Rh8 34 Qf2 Ref8 35 Rf1 Kg8?!

Black could have put up a more tenacious resistance, if he had forestalled the advance of the f-pawn: 35 ... Re8 36 g4 Kg8 37 Qg3 Bg7.



36 f4! Qg4 37 Qf3! Re8 (37 ... Qxf3 38 Rxf3 Re8 39 Rhf2 Rh7 40 f5 is worse for Black) 38 Qxg4 hxg4 39 f5 g5?!

This makes it easier for White. 39 ... Kg7, maintaining the pawn tension, was more tenacious, although I think that White would have gradually decided matters by breaking through on the queenside: Kc2, b2-b4, and if ... axb4 – Kb3xb4 etc.

40 h5 Ra8 41 Kc2 Kg7 42 Kc3 Ra6 43 Ra1 Rha8 44 b4 Kf8

A desperate exchange sacrifice. In the event of 44 ... axb4+ 45 Kxb4 Kh6 the most elegant way to win was pointed out by Ftacnik: 46 Kb5 Bg7 47 f6 Bh8 48 Rf2 Kh7 49 h6 Kg6 50 h7!, and all that is left is

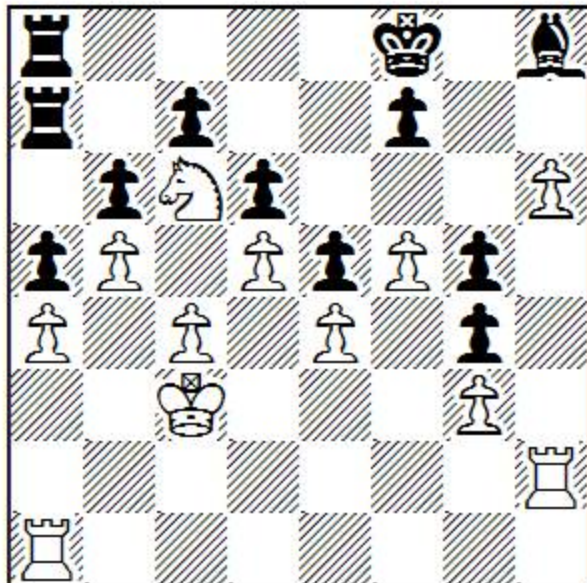
a series of 'spite' checks 50 ... Ra5+ 51 Nxa5 Rxa5+ 52 Kc6 Rc5+, which culminates in mate: 53 Kd7 Rxc4 54 a5 bxa5 55 Rxa5 Rxe4 56 Ra8 Kxh7 57 Ke7 etc.

45 b5

White could also have won by 45 bxa5 bxa5 46 Rb1, but Karpov rightly decided that a 'fortress' would not be achieved.

45 ... R6a7 46 h6 Bh8

It is interesting that after 46 ... Kg8 47 h7+ Kh8 48 Rah1 Rb7 49 Rh6 Bg7 it is White who sacrifices the exchange – 50 f6! Bxh6 51 Rxh6, and Black is absolutely helpless: 51 ... Re8 52 Ne7 (planning Nf5-e3xg4, which will open a way for the invasion of the king) 52 ... Rxe7 53 fxe7 Rb8 54 c5! bxc5 55 b6!



47 f6! (not essential, but effective) 47 ... Bxf6 48 Rf1 Bh8 49 Nxa7 Rxa7 50 Rh5 Ke7 51 Rxg5 Ra8 52 h7 f6 53 Rg8 Rf8 54 c5 dxc5 55 Kc4 Kf7 56 d6 cxd6 57 Rxf8+ Kxf8 58 Kd5 1-0

The successful year 1993 saw Karpov begin a new and final surge, enabling him to achieve several more outstanding results in events of world standard.

Suffocation of the Grünfeld

The solid set-up with g2-g3 became the 12th world champion's favourite weapon against the Grünfeld and the King's Indian Defences.

Karpov was probably attracted by its universality and the fact that in the resulting positions Black cannot immediately display activity. He was especially successfully in symmetrical positions, when his opponent's tried to neutralise White's initiative with the help of the c6- and d5-pawn wedge. I should remind you that Bronstein resorted to this in the 23rd game of his match with Botvinnik, and although he equalised fairly easily, in the end the world champion managed to turn a level endgame in his favour (*Volume 2, Game No.66*).

For a long time these positions were considered too tedious. The entire wisdom reduced to the fact that, if Black could manage to play ... Nf6-e4, the chances would supposedly be equal. Say, after 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 g3 Bg7 4 Bg2 c6 5 Nf3 d5 6 cxd5 cxd5 7 0-0 0-0 8 Nc3 he should play 8 ... Ne4! Correspondingly, White does better to play 8 Ne5! immediately, retaining a slight initiative, although this would not seem to promise him anything serious. Nevertheless, for example, Petrosian against Korchnoi in the 4th game of their match in Odessa (1974) gained an advantage in this way and converted it into a win.

The main defence was considered to be 8 ... e6 9 0-0 Nfd7, evicting the knight from e5. This is also what I played – twice in the 1986 return match (3rd and 13th games) and twice in the 1987 match (1st and 3rd games), each time gaining a draw (more details about this in Volume 7). But later Karpov successfully demonstrated that these symmetrical set-ups are by no means so harmless for Black, as at first sight. I will give two of his classic games against leading young grandmasters, where he demonstrated an unusually subtle understanding of these 'sterile' positions.

The first is from a super-tournament, dedicated to the 100th anniversary of Alekhine's birth (Moscow, autumn 1992). Here Karpov scored only 3½ out of 7, but for his game with Gata Kamsky the jury – consisting of Botvinnik, Lilienthal and Najdorf! – awarded him the prize 'for a win in Alekhine's style'.

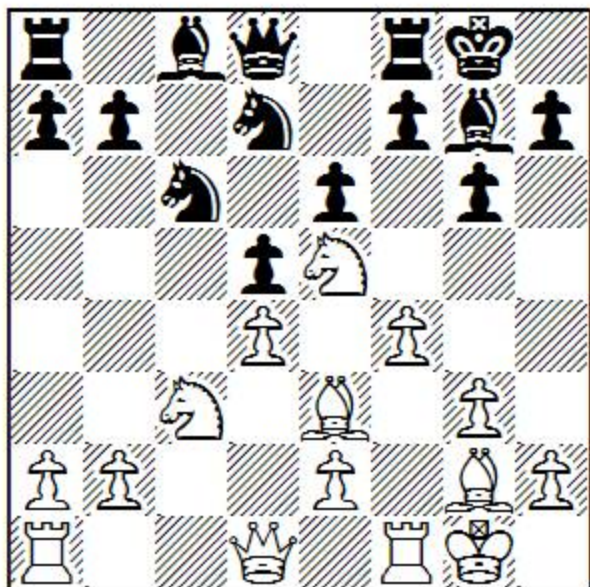
True, one of the commentators on the game, grandmaster Mikhail Krasenkow, objected: 'To me this decision is questionable. Indeed, in the games of the first Russian world champion there are several examples of the play transferring from the queenside to the kingside. But here it was the other way round – the struggle switched from the kingside to the queenside. And this is Karpov's style!'

A.Karpov-G.Kamsky

Moscow 1992, 6th round

Grünfeld Defence D79

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nf3 Bg7 4 g3 c6 5 Bg2 d5 6 cxd5 cxd5 7 Nc3 0-0 8 Ne5 e6 9 0-0 Nfd7
10 f4 Nc6 11 Be3



What should Black play now?

In the game Karpov-Timman (Euwe memorial, Amsterdam, May 1987) after 11 ... Ndx e5 12 fxe5 f6 13 exf6 Rxf6 14 Qd2 Bd7 15 Kh1 Rxf1+ 16 Rxf1 Qe7 17 Rd1! (a typical Karpov move, reinforcing the d4-pawn) 17 ... Rc8 18 a3 (another prophylactic move) 18 ... Bf6 19 Bg1 Bg5 20 Qe1 Nd8 21 e4! dxe4 22 Qxe4 White gained a clear advantage.

Timman's play can probably be improved, but after 11 ... Ndx e5 Black apparently has no clear way to equalise. Other ways had to be sought ...

11 ... Nb6?!

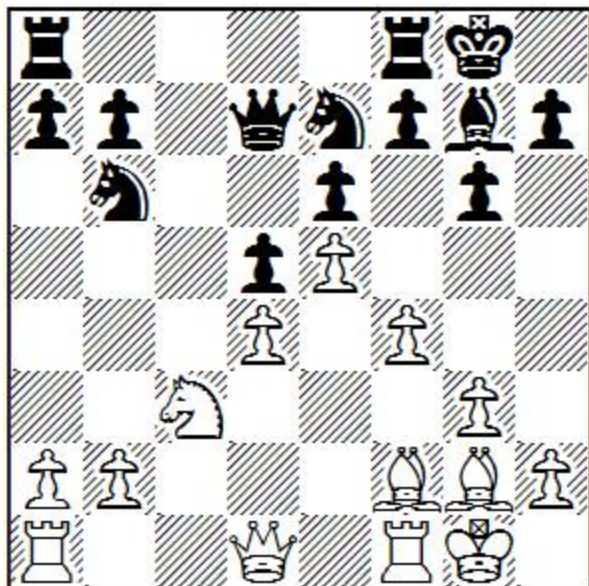
Kamsky follows the 1st game of the Seville match (1987). The ease with which I equalised apparently put Gata in an optimistic frame of mind. But he had not delved into the subtleties of the position. In fact, the development plan carried out by Black is not sufficient for equality

and it is better to drive away the knight immediately by 11 ... f6 (*Game No.101*).

12 Bf2 Bd7

After 12 ... f6 Black now has to reckon with 13 Nxc6 bxc6 14 e4! It was because of the positional threat e2-e4 that in the 3rd game of the Seville match I preferred 12 ... Ne7.

13 e4! Ne7 14 Nxd7 Qxd7 15 e5



White has made progress: he has advanced his backward pawn to e5 and gained space.

For the moment the position is closed and the strength of the two bishops is not felt. But White has the prospect of opening the game by the advance of his kingside pawns. Black, meanwhile, is hoping for counterplay on the queenside: to prevent the leap of the knight to c4, White will have to play b2-b3, and then Black can create pressure on the c-file. He is also hoping that White's activity will not lead to a rapid result, i.e. that the pawn storm (g3-g4, f4-f5) will not prove deadly.

15 ... Rac8

I played 15 ... Rfc8 (this hardly changes anything, since all the same Black needs to double rooks on the c-file) 16 Rc1 Bf8. Here Karpov played rather cautiously – 17 Bf3, and the chances became equal: 17 ... Rc7 18 b3 Rac8 19 Qd2 Nc6 20 Qb2 a6 21 Be2 Qe7. But immediately

afterwards many pointed out the possibility of the energetic plan with g3-g4 and f4-f5!

16 Rc1 a6

Karpov recommended 16 ... Rc7, but after 17 b3 Rfc8 18 Qd2 it is not clear what Black can do apart from the scheduled move 18 ... a6, leading to a position from the game.

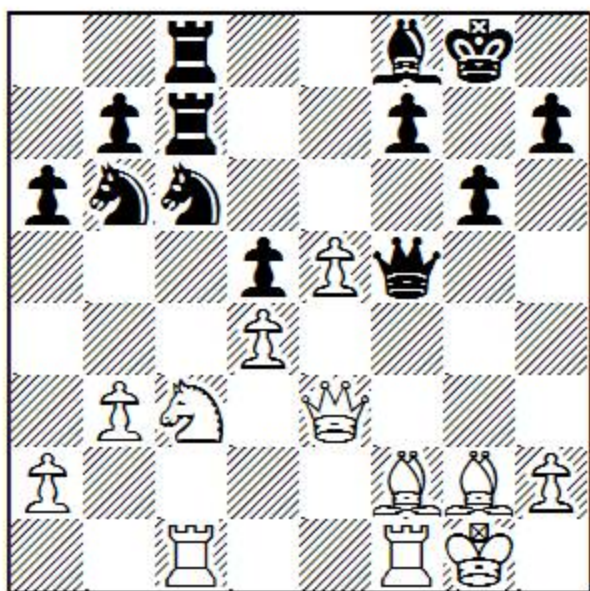
Perhaps he should have played 16 ... Nc4 17 b3 Na3 18 Qd2 Rc7 19 Qb2 Nb5, trying to exchange pieces, but even after 20 Ne2 White has an enduring advantage thanks to his greater space and two bishops.

17 b3 Rc7 18 Qd2 Rfc8 19 g4! Bf8 20 Qe3!

Karpov avoids the better endgame after 20 Ne2 Rxc1 21 Rxc1 Rxc1 22 Nxc1 Nc6 23 Nd3, since he is aiming for more. Instead he makes an important prophylactic move, reducing the effectiveness of the counterplay on the c-file. For the essential manoeuvre of his bishop to a3 Black has to block this file with his knight, and then White succeeds in playing f4-f5 and removing his knight from c3 and his rook from the c-file, without in any way disrupting the coordination of his pieces.

20 ... Nc6 21 f5! Ba3

Kamsky consistently carries out his plan, avoiding a possible sharpening of the play – 21 ... exf5 22 gxf5 Qxf5.



Analysis diagram

White has many tempting possibilities, and the best is far from obvious. The d5-pawn is mined: 23 Nxd5? Nxd5 24 Bxd5 Nb4 25 Rxc7? Nxd5 and wins. Karpov initially gave 23 Bh3 Qh5 24 Bxc8 Bh6 25 Qh3 (25 Qg3 Bxc1 is hardly any better) 25 ... Bxc1 26 Qxh5 gxh5 27 Bxb7 but then he refuted his own recommendation in *New in Chess* by 27 ... Bb2! 28 Bxc6? Bxc3 and wins (therefore there only remains 28 Nd1 Bxd4 with equality).

23 Ne2!?, another idea of Karpov, is more promising – the inclusion of the knight sharply strengthens the attack! Thus if 23 ... Qg4, then 24 Kh1 with the threat of Bh3, while 23 ... Qh5 24 Nf4 Qg4 25 Kh1 Bh6 runs into 26 Be1! Ne7 27 Rxc7 Rxc7 28 Bh3 Qg5 (28 ... Bxf4 29 Rxf4 Qd1 30 Rf1) 29 Ba5 Rc6 30 Qe1! with the threat of 31 Bxb6 Rxb6 32 Bd7 and Qa5, and that is not all: after 30 ... Bf8 there is also 31 Nd3!, while if 30 ... Bg7 31 Bxb6 Rxb6, then 32 Qa5 Rc6 33 Qd8+ Bf8 34 Nxd5 Kg7 35 Nf4 is also good.

22 Rcd1 Nb4

A natural move, but for an instant it blocks the bishop's path to the kingside. 'The black pieces are tripping over one another's feet, which White exploits.' (Krasenkow)

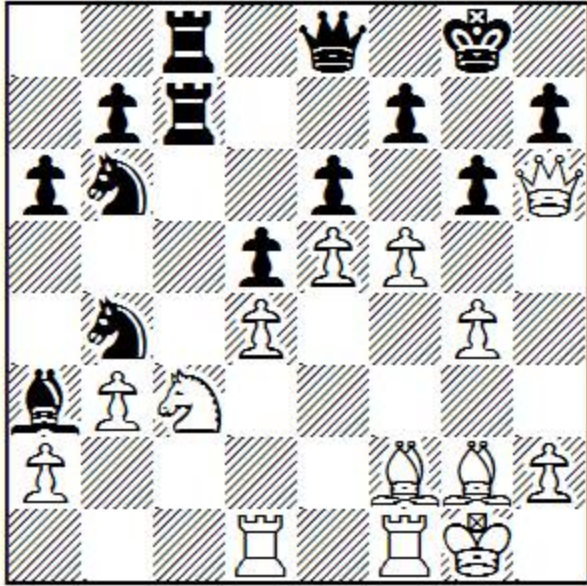
23 Qh6!

23 Nb1 is inaccurate on account of 23 ... Nc2! (Karpov), and the bishop at a3 succeeds in returning to its 'native' flank.

23 ... Qe8?!

Knight leaps – 23 ... Nd3?! 24 Nxd5! Nxd5 25 Rxd3 or 23 ... Nc2 24 Ne2 (Karpov) 24 ... Bf8 25 Qh4 Nb4 26 a3 Rc2 27 Nf4 Nc6 28 Rd3 – do not relieve Black of his difficulties.

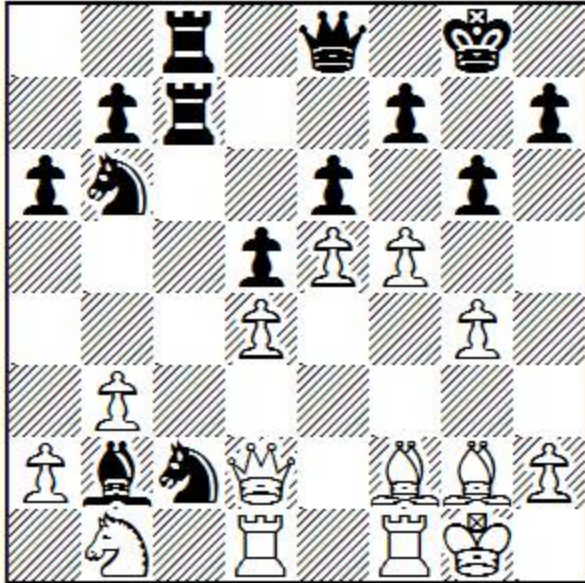
But the square for the queen (the guard of the f8-square and defender of the knight at b4) should have been chosen more accurately – 23 ... Qe7! 24 Nb1 Bb2, 'abolishing' 25 Qd2. After 25 Bh4 (if 25 a3 Nc2 26 Rd3 Qf8 27 Qd2 Black should decide on 27 ... Bxa3 28 Nxa3 Qxa3 – the knight is lost after 28 ... Nxa3? 29 fxe6 fxe6 30 Qa5 Rc6 31 Be1 Qe7 32 Bb4 – 29 Rh3 Qf8 in the hope that the storm will pass by) 25 ... Qf8 26 Qd2 Rc2 (Karpov) 27 Qe3 or 26 Qf4 Rc2 (26 ... Nxa2? 27 fxe6 fxe6 28 Qd2) 27 a3 White's chances are better, but the rook at c2 restricts his attacking impulses.



24 Nb1! Bb2 (now the bishop will for ever forget the way home) 25 Qd2! Nc2

After 25 ... a5 26 a3! (26 Qxb2?? Rc2 27 Qa3 Rxa2) 26 ... Nc2 Karpov would have simply captured the pawn – 27 Qxa5, while if 26 ... Rc2 he would have replied 27 Qe1! Qb5 28 axb4! Re2 29 Qxe2 Qxe2 30 bxa5 Nd7 31 Rd2, winning the ill-fated bishop.

Black's pieces have penetrated deeply into White's position, but it would look better if he had a rook at c2. The knight paralyses its own rooks, and this frees White's hands on the kingside.



26 Kh1

'Black's counterplay is temporarily parried, and Karpov unhurriedly (in his best style) begins preparing for decisive action.' (Krasenkow)

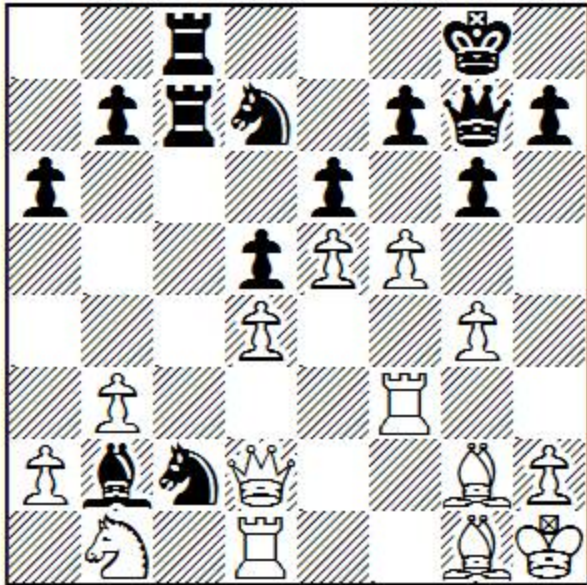
26 ... Qe7 27 Bg1 Nd7 28 Rf3 Qb4

'Black prevents the manoeuvre Rh3 and Qh6.' (Karpov)

29 Qh6! Qf8 30 Qg5! Qg7

White's queen has outplayed Black's, by luring it to g7. 30 ... Qd8 31 Qd2 Qe7 was more tenacious, continuing to look both ways, although after 32 Rdf1! White would most probably have given his opponent cause to regret his mistake on the 23rd move.

31 Qd2!



An impressive queen pendulum! Black is tied up, his minor pieces are hopelessly stuck, and White can continue to prepare a decisive offensive.

31 ... b6 32 Rdf1 a5 33 h4 (threatening a possible h4-h5-h6) **33 ... Nb4**

Kamsky has nevertheless ensured the invasion of his rook at c2 (34 Qxb2? Rc2), but in the meantime White has made progress on the other side of the board, and this belated activity is no longer dangerous for him (in the end it even played into his hands!).

34 a3 Rc2 35 Qf4 Nc6 36 Bh3! Nd8 (36 ... Re2 37 Nc3!) **37 Be3 b5 38 R3f2!**

A completely unexpected decision. Seeing that Black is fairly solid on the kingside, Karpov finds a paradoxical plan: exploiting the desperate position of the bishop at b2, he opens a second front in the place where nearly all the black pieces are crowded – the queenside. After the exchange of the rooks – the opponent's only pieces with any fighting capability! – the white queen breaks into the enemy position via the c-file, while the black queen is stuck on the kingside.

38 ... b4 39 axb4 axb4 40 Rxc2 Rxc2 41 Rf2! Rxf2 42 Qxf2 Ba3

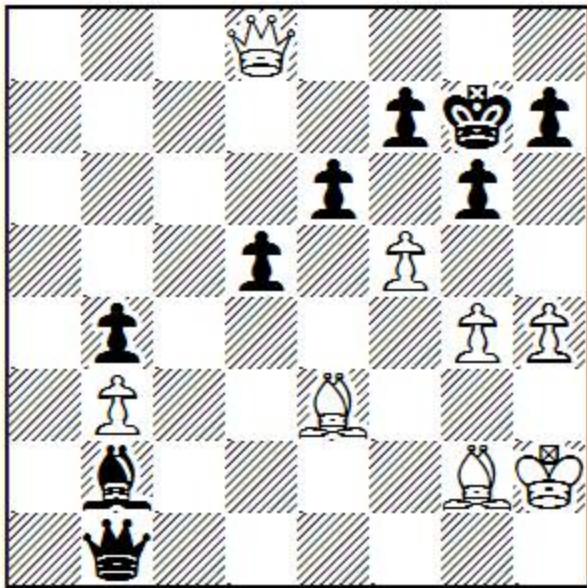
In the event of **42 ... Bc3 43 f6 Qf8 44 Qc2** Black has to go into a hopeless endgame a pawn down (Karpov), since **44 ... Be1** is even worse on account of **45 Qc7 Qe8 46 Bf1 Nf8 47 Qe7! Qd7 48 Bh6!** 'An amusing finish! But at a3 the bishop is completely shut out of the game.' (Krasenkow)

43 Qc2 Nxe5?!

This loses by force. 43 ... Nb8 would have allowed Black to avoid immediate losses, although, of course, after 44 f6 Qf8 45 Bf1 (Krasenkow) or 45 Nd2 followed by Nf3 and Bf1 (Karpov) he can no longer hold out.

44 dxe5 Qxe5 45 Qc8! Qe4+ 46 Bg2 Qxb1+ 47 Kh2 Bb2 48 Qxd8+ Kg7

And here Karpov crowns his strategic masterpiece with a pretty mating attack.



49 f6+! Bxf6 50 Bh6+! Kxh6 51 Qxf6 Qc2 52 g5+ Kh5 53 Kg3!

This sort of thing happens more often in studies. It was not yet too late to go wrong: 53 Kh3? Qf5+.

53 ... Qc7+ 54 Kh3 1-0

Mate is inevitable.

In 1993, when Short and I 'slammed the door' and against all expectations Karpov returned to the throne, FIDE decided to set its champion an additional exam, by obliging him to begin in the new cycle with a semi-final match of 10 games. And this match took place in February 1995 in the Indian town of Sanghi Nagar.

Karpov's opponent was the talented 26-year-old grandmaster Boris Gelfand – another bright star from the late 1980s-early 1990s, fully comparable with Anand and Ivanchuk. In an interview after my fifth match with Karpov (1990) I even offered the opinion that in the next

qualifying cycle the most dangerous opponent for the ex-champion would in fact be Gelfand. However, it so happened that they met three years later, after Boris had already won his second Interzonal tournament (1993) and then defeated Adams and Kramnik in matches.

Gelfand must have pinned great hopes on this semi-final match. On his side was a 17-year age difference, which could become a significant factor, in view of the difficult climatic conditions in India ... After two draws at the start, he took the lead by winning the 3rd game in a Caro-Kann with 3 e5 – Karpov has always had difficult relations with this variation.

But in the very next game, the 4th, Karpov recouped his losses in his favourite symmetrical 'Grünfeld'. On this occasion the struggle was more complicated and double-edged, than in his encounter with Kamsky.

Game 101

A.Karpov-B.Gelfand

FIDE Candidates Match, Sanghi Nagar 1995, 4th round

Grünfeld Defence D79

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 g3 c6 4 Bg2 d5 5 cxd5 cxd5 6 Nf3 Bg7 7 Ne5 0-0 8 Nc3 e6

In Linares 1991 Gelfand chose 8 ... Bf5 9 0-0 Ne4 against Karpov, and after 10 Be3?! (in the game with Korchnoi mentioned at the start of the chapter, Petrosian played more actively – 10 Bf4) 10 ... Nxc3 11 bxc3 Nc6 White did not gain any advantage, but ... he won the drawn double rook endgame that was soon reached. It is amusing that in this same set-up Fischer won a similar endgame against Geller with Black (Palma de Mallorca Interzonal 1970).

9 0-0 Nfd7 10 f4 Nc6 11 Be3 f6

The main continuation (11 ... Nb6?! – *Game No.100*).

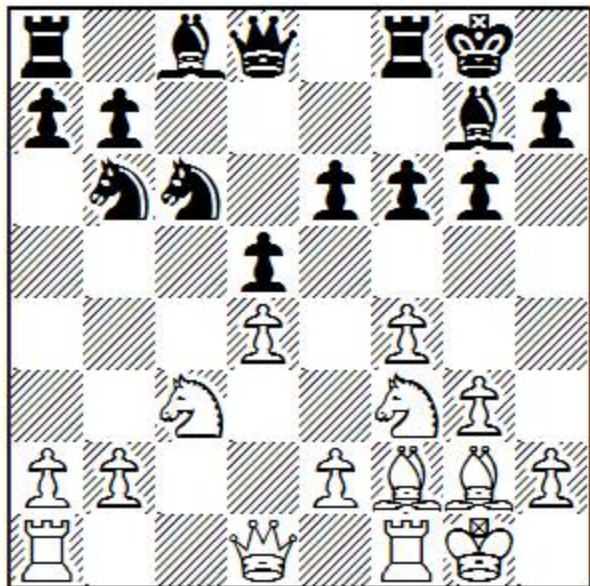
12 Nf3

Karpov-Timman (4th matchgame, Kuala Lumpur 1990) went 12 Nd3 (12 Nxc6 bxc6 is equal, Giorgadze-Khuzman, Uzhgorod 1987) 12 ... Nb6 13 b3 Qe7?! 14 a4 Bd7 15 Bc1! Rfd8 16 e3 Be8 17 Ba3 Qf7 18 Rc1 Bf8 19 Bxf8 Qxf8 20 g4! with the initiative for White, but then Black improved: 13 ... Bd7 14 Bf2 Qe7 15 Rc1 Rad8 16 Rc2 Be8 with equality (Karpov-Timman, 12th matchgame, Holland/Indonesia 1993).

12 ... **Nb6** (12 ... f5 13 Ne5 Nb6 14 b3 Bd7 15 Qd3 Nc8 16 Bc1! led to some advantage for White in Kasparov-Topalov, 'Advanced chess',

2nd matchgame, Leon 1998) 13 Bf2

13 b3 Bd7 14 Bc1 f5 15 Ba3 has also been tried (Bologan-Leko, Dortmund 2004).



13 ... Bd7

A novelty, although 13 ... f5 (preventing e2-e4) 14 Ne5 Bd7 is sounder, when Black has usually succeeded in extinguishing the opponent's slight initiative: 15 Qd2 Nc8 16 Qe3 Kh8 17 Rfd1 Nd6 18 b3 Rc8 19 Rac1 Be8 20 Be1 Bf6 (Karpov-Kasparov, 13th matchgame, London/Leningrad 1986), 15 Rc1 Qe7 (Bareev-Leko, Sarajevo 1999), or 15 g4 Qe7 16 gxf5 gxf5 17 Kh1 Kh8 18 Qd3 Bf6 19 Qh3 Rg8, then ... Rg7 and ... Rag8 (Bologan-Leko, Dortmund rapidplay 2004).

However, such play is precisely in Karpov's style: he can engage in the gradual strengthening of his position, seeking weaknesses in the opponent's camp, and manoeuvre in the expectation of some incautious action.

14 e4 dxe4 15 Nxe4 Nd5

Having gained secure control of the d5-square, Gelfand was hoping possibly to exploit the weakness of the isolated d4-pawn. But the defects of Black's position are also obvious: a weak e6-pawn and passive bishop at g7 which is hard to activate, since ... f6-f5 will weaken the e5-square.

16 Re1 (16 Nc5 b6 17 Nxd7 Qxd7 is unfavourable for White – Ftacnik) 16 ... b6 17 Nc3!

Now that the prospect of going to c5 has disappeared, there is nothing for the knight to do on e4 and its return to c3 is perfectly logical – the struggle for the d5-square!

It is doubtful whether the attempt to put immediate pressure on the e6-pawn by 17 Bh3 was any better, since Black defends his weakness without any trouble: 17 ... Qc7 18 Rc1 Rac8 19 Nc3 Qd6. But in combination with pressure on d5, this threat will be unpleasant, since it is not so easy for Black to manoeuvre in restricted space.

17 ... Nce7 18 Qb3 (18 Bh3 Nc7 Karpov) 18 ... a5

Now, after the natural 18 ... Rc8, 19 Bh3! was rather good: 19 ... Rc6 (or 19 ... f5 20 Ng5 Rc6 21 Bg2) 20 Rac1 (Ftacnik). Not wanting to endure the queen at b3, Gelfand decides on a weakening of his pawn structure.

19 a3

Karpov never liked to weaken his pawns without necessity. Thus here he prevents the advance ... a5-a4-a3, although after 19 Bh3!? a4 20 Qc2 Qc8 (Ftacnik) 21 Qe2 a3 22 Nxd5 Nxd5 23 Rac1 Qe8 24 b3 Black's problems would have remained unresolved: 24 ... f5 25 Bg2 Rc8 26 Rxc8 Qxc8 27 Ne5, and if 24 ... Rc8, then not 25 Rxc8 Qxc8 26 Bxe6+ Bxe6 27 Qxe6+ Qxe6 28 Rxe6 Rc8 with counterplay, but 25 Rc4!, retaining pressure.

19 ... a4 20 Qd1

If 20 Qa2 Nxc3 21 bxc3 b5 (with equality – Karpov) 22 Nd2 Rc8 23 Ne4 the chances are with White, but after 20 ... Rc8 21 Rac1 Rc6 (Ftacnik) 22 Nd2 Be8 Black succeeds in defending his weak pawns: 23 Nc4 Bf7, and if 23 Nxd5 exd5 24 b3 (an attempt to exploit the weakness at b6), then 24 ... Rxc1 25 Rxc1 g5 is possible, with counterplay on the kingside.

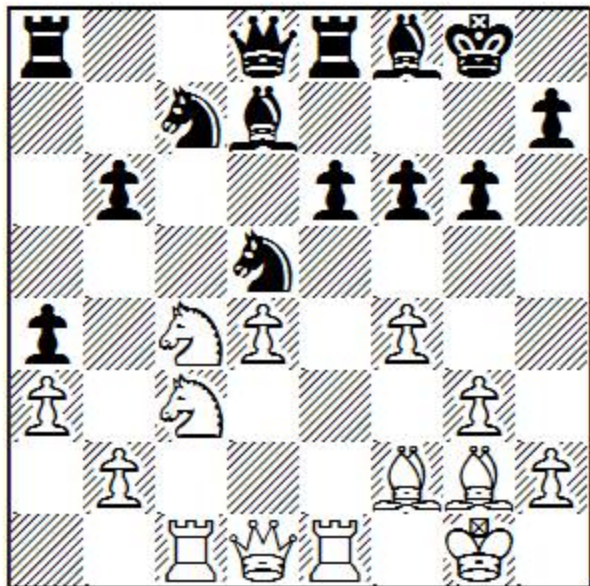
20 ... Nc7

Gelfand replaces the blockading knight: the one from e7 will go to d5, so that the other can defend the e6-pawn from c7. Defending this pawn with the queen leaves White with the advantage: 20 ... Qb8 21 Bh3 Qd6 22 Ne4 Qc6 23 Rc1 Qb5 24 Rc2 Nf5 25 Nc3! (the struggle revolves around the d5-square) 25 ... Qc6 26 Nxd5 Qxd5 27 Bg2 Qd6 28 Nd2, preparing a breakthrough in the centre.

20 ... Nc7 should not be criticised: Black still retains an acceptable game. But it is instructive to observe how Karpov seeks resources,

manoeuvring on the central squares.

21 Rc1 Ned5 22 Nd2! Re8 (after 22 ... b5 the knight takes a different route – 23 Nde4) 23 Nc4! Bf8

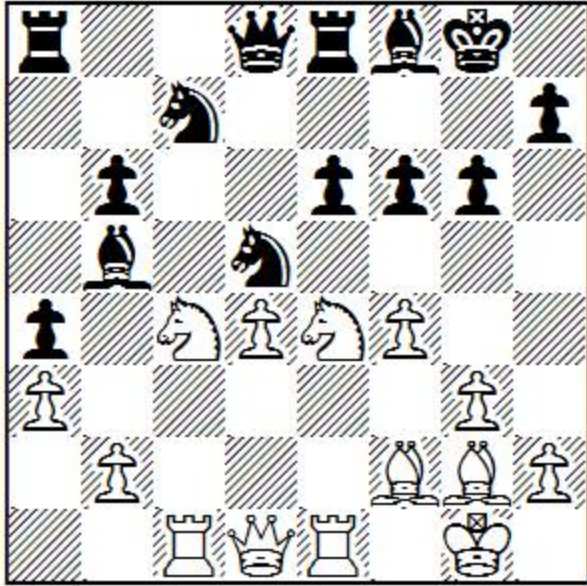


24 Ne4

Karpov unexpectedly changes plan: since he does not consider it useful to exchange his knight at c3, he temporarily stops besieging the d5-point. Even so, the logical intensification of this siege by 24 Ne3 would have set Black the most serious problems: 24 ... Bc6?! 25 Ncxd5! Bxd5 26 Nxd5 Nxd5 27 Qc2! (stronger than Karpov's recommendation 27 Rc6) with an obvious advantage, or 24 ... Nxc3 25 Rxc3 Ra7 (anaesthetic, but after Ftacnik's 25 ... Rc8 there follows 26 Qc2, and it is not easy for Black to disentangle himself) 26 h4 with the initiative for White.

In the game, by contrast, the retention of the d5-outpost enabled Black to maintain a sound defence. But, on the other hand, with a larger number of pieces on the board Gelfand also has to solve more difficult problems. In the end Karpov's idea proved justified, since in the subsequent manoeuvring Black did not act in the best way.

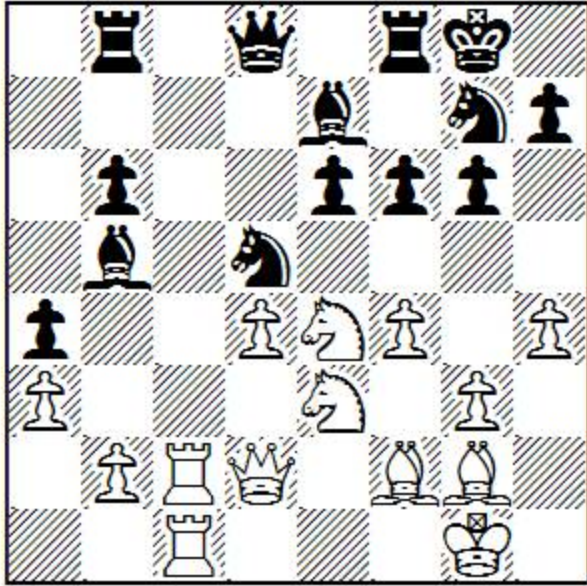
24 ... Bb5



25 Re2! Be7 26 Rec2 Rb8 (Nxb6 was threatened) 27 Qd2 Rf8?!

Black begins what appears to quite a good regrouping: the rook vacates a square for the knight, which goes to g7, in order to cover the king and hinder a possible advance of the h-pawn. But this plan has an obvious drawback: it weakens Black's control of d5. Gelfand's desire to move his knight from c7, where it is under 'X-ray' attack by the white rooks, is understandable, but in my opinion 27 ... Qd7 was clearly preferable – after 28 h4 he could have played either 28 ... Rec8 29 h5 Ne8 30 hxg6 hxg6 31 Ne3 Bc6, or even 28 ... h5. That is, thanks to his control of d5 Black could nevertheless have hoped to obtain a normal game.

28 h4! Ne8?! (consistent, although 28 ... Qd7 was again better – even with a loss of tempo!) 29 Ne3 Ng7



30 Nc3!

Returning to the attack on the d5-point. An exchange sacrifice also merits serious consideration: 30 Nxd5!? exd5 31 Nc3 Bc4 (after Ftacnik's move 31 ... Bc6 White has the strong reply 32 Qe2!, when it is hard for Black to hold his a4- and d5-pawns) 32 Nxa4 Bb3 33 Nc3 (Karpov), and if 33 ... Bxc2, then 34 Rxc2! In any event White will pick up the d5-pawn and have excellent compensation. But Karpov wants to achieve more!

30 ... Nxc3

Black is forced to give up his outpost. In the event of 30 ... Bc6 31 Ncxd5 Bxd5 32 Nxd5 exd5 33 Qd3 b5 34 Qf3 (Ftacnik) he would have lost a very important pawn.

31 Rxc3 g5!?

Realising that the quiet development of events does not promise him anything, Boris decides to open up the play on the kingside.

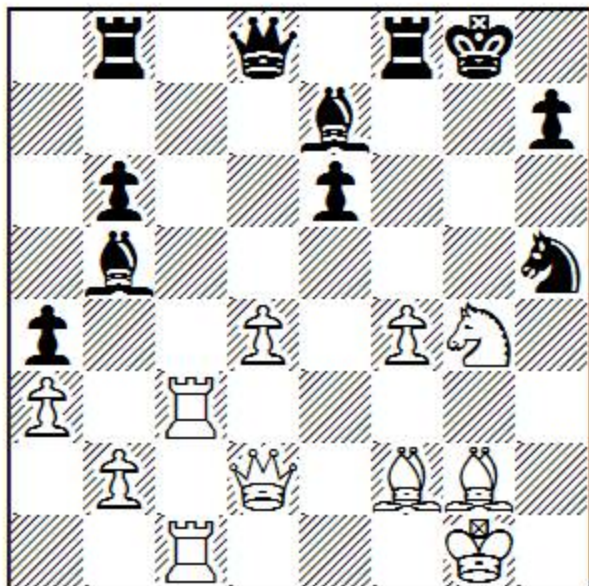
32 hxg5

Now the dangerous breakthrough 32 d5!? is parried by 32 ... gxf4 33 gxf4 Kh8, and the weakening of the white king gives Black counter-chances.

32 ... fxg5 33 Ng4 gxf4 34 gxf4 Bd6?!

Ftacnik recommended attacking the f4-pawn in another way – 34 ... Nh5!? This would in fact have set White somewhat more difficult

problems.



Analysis diagram

35 f5!? exf5 36 Qh6! (but not 36 Nh6+ Kg7 37 Rc7 Kg6!, when White has nothing better than a draw: 38 Ng4 fxe4 39 Be4+ Kf7 40 Qh6 Nf6 41 Bxh7 Rh8 42 Qg6+) looks highly promising. However Black plays, things will be difficult for him:

1) 36 ... Ng7 37 Ne5 Rf6 (after 37 ... Bg5 there is the strong reply 38 Bd5+! Qxd5 39 Qxg5 Qd6 40 Rc7 Qf6 41 Qg2 Kh8 42 Bh4 Qh6 43 Bg5 Qd6 44 Bf4 Qf6 45 Rf7 and wins) 38 Qh1! (the bishop takes aim at d5, and the rook at h3) 38 ... Kh8 39 Rh3 h5 (39 ... Qg8 40 Bh4) 40 Rxh5+ Nxh5 41 Qxh5+ Kg8 42 Qg5+ Kf8 43 Rc3 etc.;

2) 36 ... fxe4 37 Qxh5 Be8 (37 ... Bg5 38 Rc7 Bd3 39 Qxg4 Bg6 40 R1c6, and Black cannot hold out; one of the threats is 41 Rxg6+ hxe6 42 Qe6+ Kh8 43 Qh3+) 38 Qxg4+ Kh8 39 Bg3 Bd6 40 Rc7! Bg6 41 Rd7, and the queen has to be given up: 41 ... Bxg3 42 Rxd8 Bf2+ 43 Kh1 Rbxh8 44 d5. White has an obvious advantage, but the battle is still continuing.

The best defence after 35 f5 is to sacrifice the queen in a different way: 35 ... Bg5! 36 Be3 Rxf5 37 Bxg5 Rxe5 38 Rc8 Rxe4 39 Rxd8+ Rxd8 40 Qh6 Nf4 41 Kh1 Rf8 42 Be4 Ng6 – here White's winning chances are not so great.

However, rather than the 'Tal-like' 35 f5 Karpov would probably have preferred 35 Rf3 (Ftacnik) 35 ... Bd6 36 Nh6+ Kg7 37 f5 with an attack, or 35 ... Nf6 36 Nh6+ (36 Ne5 is weaker: 36 ... Ne4 37 Qe3 Nxf2 38 Rxf2 Bh4 39 Rf3 Rb7! and ... Rg7) 36 ... Kh8 37 Qe3 with an obvious advantage in the event of 37 ... Bd7 38 Qe5 Rc8 39 Rxc8 Qxc8 40 Rc3 Qe8 41 Rc7. The pawn sacrifice 37 ... Bd6 38 Qxe6 Qd7 does not give Black full counterplay: 39 f5 Rbe8 40 Qxd7 Bxd7 41 Bg3 Bxg3 42 Rxg3.

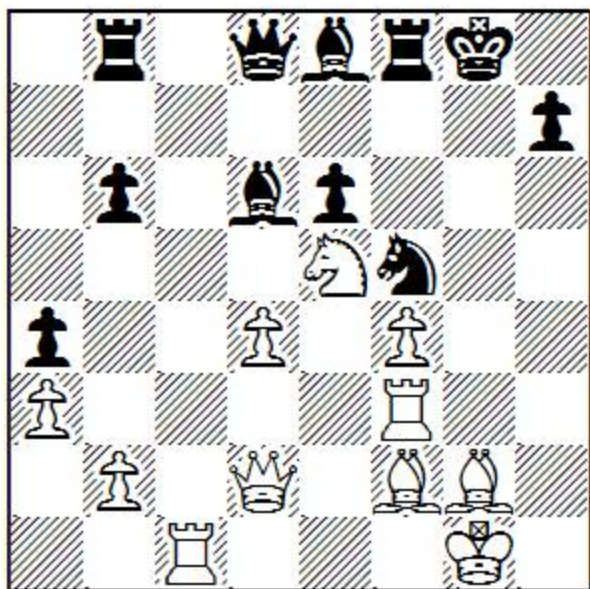
35 Rf3! Be8

Not even trying to exploit the open g-file – 35 ... Kh8. And indeed, after the thematic 36 d5! (36 Ne5 Nf5 37 d5 is weaker because of 37 ... Qf6!, but not 37 ... Bxe5 38 fxe5 Qxd5 39 Qxd5 exd5 40 Bh3 Bd7 41 Rc7 Be6 42 Rc6 Bd7 43 Rf6 Rxf6 44 exf6 Rg8+ 45 Kh2 Rg5 46 Be3 Rh5 47 Kg1 and Bg4!) 36 ... exd5 37 f5 White's threats quickly mount.

The aim of 35 ... Be8 is obvious: to seize the initiative after 36 d5? Bh5 37 Bh3 e5.

36 Ne5 Nf5

Black has to do something to oppose the d4-d5 advance, but what? After 36 ... Bxe5 37 fxe5 Rxf3 38 Bxf3 his position is difficult: if 38 ... Bh5, then 39 Bg2! is correct (Ftacnik's recommendation 39 Bc6, with the idea of 39 ... b5 40 d5 exd5 41 Ba7!, is dubious on account of 39 ... Kh8! 40 Bxa4 Nf5).



37 d5!

The decisive breakthrough at this once well-fortified point. The position is opened to White's obvious advantage.

37 ... Bxe5 (37 ... exd5 38 Qxd5+ is no better) 38 fxe5 Rb7

After 38 ... exd5 (38 ... Qxd5? 39 Rg3+) Karpov gave 39 e6. But it is also possible to play 39 Rf4!? (Ftacnik's move 39 Rd3 is unclear in view of 39 ... d4, when 40 Bxd4?! Bb5 is bad for White) 39 ... d4 (39 ... Ne7 40 Rxf8+ Kxf8 41 Bh4 Ftacnik) 40 Bxd4 Nxd4 41 Rxd4 Qe7 42 e6, or even stronger 40 Rf1! Now if 40 ... Qg5 White wins by 41 Bh4 Qg6 42 Kh2, and after 40 ... Bb5 41 Bh4 Qd7 by the diverting 42 e6!, when in the event of 42 ... Qxe6 the black queen no longer defends the d4-pawn: 43 Rg4+ Kh8 44 Rxf5, or 43 ... Ng7 44 Qxd4 Qd7 45 Bd5+ Kh8 46 Bf6.

It may seem that the manoeuvre of the rook to g7 will give Black some chances, but Karpov convincingly demonstrates that this is an illusion.

39 Kh2! Rg7 (39 ... exd5 40 Rf4! Rd7 41 Rf1 etc.) 40 Bh3 Bh5

After 40 ... Bg6 not only 41 d6 (Ftacnik) is strong, but also 41 Rc6!, and Black's position is unenviable.

41 Rf4 Kh8?!

Even so, 41 ... Bg6 would have offered better practical chances, despite 42 d6 (Karpov) or 42 Rc6!

42 Bxf5!

Here White does not have to worry about parting with his king's main defender: he wins the exchange, and Black's threats are easily parried.

42 ... exf5 (42 ... Rxf5 43 Bh4!) 43 Bh4 Qe8 (43 ... Qb8 44 d6!) 44 Bf6 Bg4 45 Bxg7+ Kxg7 46 Rc7+ Kh8 47 e6!

Finally allowing the opponent to drive the king into the centre, but ...

47 ... Qh5+ 48 Kg1 Qg5 49 Kf2! Qh4+ 50 Ke3 1-0

White's passed pawns have become totally irresistible.

This monumental game had a decisive influence on the further course of the match: by winning in good style, Karpov not only levelled the scores, but also undermined Gelfand's belief in his ultimate success. After a draw in the 5th game, Boris lost the 6th, and after it also the 7th – with White in a Queen's Indian Defence. When he sealed his 61st move, he still retained hopes of saving himself in a very interesting bishop endgame, but on the resumption he committed an imperceptible error as early as the 63rd move, and Karpov created a

genuine Sanghi Nagar study! Later he was to say: 'This adjourned position was the most complicated in my career.'

After gaining a draw in the 8th game and also winning the 9th, Karpov won the match ahead of schedule by the convincing score 6-3. Now he faced a final encounter with Gata Kamsky, who had crushed Valery Salov in the other semi-final ...

'Tournament of his Life'

When talking about Karpov's upsurge after his return to the FIDE throne, everyone immediately remembers his phenomenal triumph in Linares 1994. However, before this is described, it should be mentioned that no less successful for him in the creative sense was the 1992 tournament in Biel, which took place just three months after his ill-fated match with Short. We are already familiar with one game from there (*Game No.96*), and here is another striking example.

Game 102

A.Karpov-A.Beliavsky

Biel 1992, 5th round

Ruy Lopez C95

1 e4

In the 1990s Karpov would mainly 'serve from the right' only against a specific opponent. Thus in the given instance he probably took into account Beliavsky's predilection for the Breyer Variation, which at one time he himself used to happily play for both sides.

1 ... e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bb5 a6 4 Ba4 Nf6 5 0-0 Be7 6 Re1 b5 7 Bb3 d6 8 c3 0-0 9 h3 Nb8 10 d4 (10 d3 – *Game No.51*) 10 ... Nbd7 11 Nbd2 Bb7 12 Bc2 Re8 13 a4

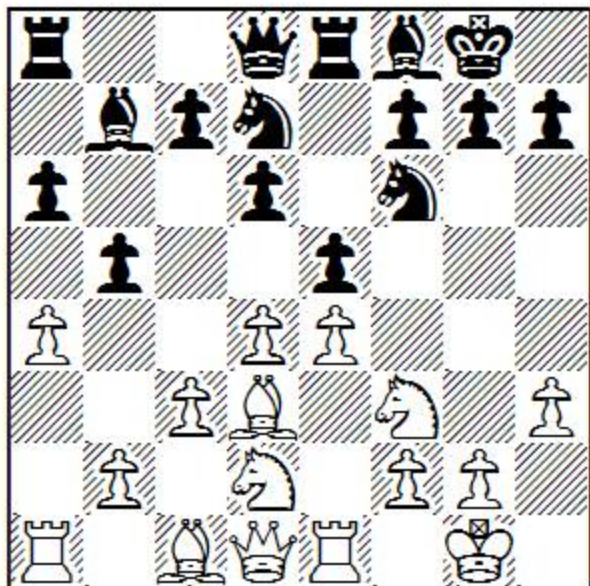
This move, which first occurred back in 1964 in a game between two Moscow masters, became internationally known only nine years later (cf. the following note). But its popularity began to grow starting in 1988, although the main line remained 13 Nf1 (13 b4 – *Game No.70*) 13 ... Bf8 14 Ng3 (*Volume 4, Game No.107*).

13 ... Bf8

The game Keres-Reshevsky (Petropolis Interzonal 1973) went 13 ... c5 14 Nf1 (14 d5! is stronger) 14 ... Bf8 (14 ... d5!?) 15 Ng3 g6 16 b3 Bg7 17 dxe5 with a quick draw, but after 17 d5! the traditional 'Spanish torture' would have awaited Black.

14 Bd3

Hoping to restrict the opponent's actions by pressure on the b5-pawn.



14 ... c6

The position of the bishop at d3 gives Black the opportunity for a freeing advance in the centre: 14 ... b4 15 a5 d5!? 16 exd5 exd4 17 Rxe8 Qxe8 18 c4 Nc5 (Khalifman-Beliavsky, Leningrad 1990). The recent game Haznedaroglu-Short (Izmir 2004) confirmed that this is perfectly acceptable for Black: 19 Nb3 Nxd3 20 Qxd3 c6 21 dxc6 Qxc6 22 Nbx d4 Qc7 with sufficient counterplay for the pawn.

Another version of the pawn sacrifice – 14 ... exd4 15 cxd4 c5 (Spassky-Karpov, Tilburg 1983) – did not become established in tournament play.

15 b3

After the standard 15 Nf1 Beliavsky twice successfully solved his opening problems by 15 ... d5 16 Bg5 dxe4 17 Rxe4 Be7 – against Balashov (56th USSR Championship, Odessa 1989) and Anand (Linares 1992).

15 ... g6

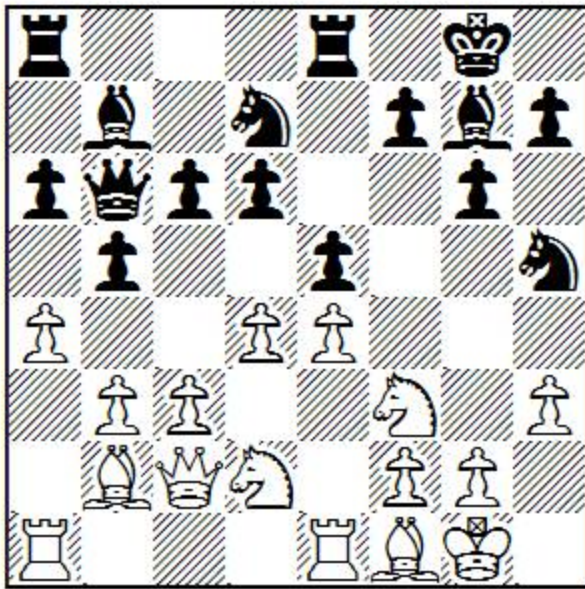
Here 15 ... d5?! leads to the loss of a pawn after 16 exd5, for example: 16 ... Nxd5 17 dxe5 Nc5 (17 ... Nxc3? 18 Qc2) 18 Qc2 Nxd3 19 Qxd3 b4 (19 ... Nf4 20 Qf5) 20 c4 Nc3 21 Qc2! c5 22 Bb2 etc.

16 Qc2 Bg7

16 ... Rc8!? is interesting: 17 Bb2 Nh5 (it is too early for 17 ... exd4?! 18 cxd4 d5 19 e5 Nh5 on account of 20 e6! Rxe6 21 Rxe6 fxe6 22 Bxg6 hxg6 23 Qxg6+ Ng7 24 Ng5 Nf6 25 Qf7+ and Qxb7) 18 Bf1 exd4! 19 cxd4 (19 Nxd4 Bg7 20 N4f3 is equal) 19 ... d5, and after 20 e5 b4! Black even seizes the initiative (Bezgodov-Balashov, Perm 1997).

17 Bb2 Nh5 18 Bf1 Qb6

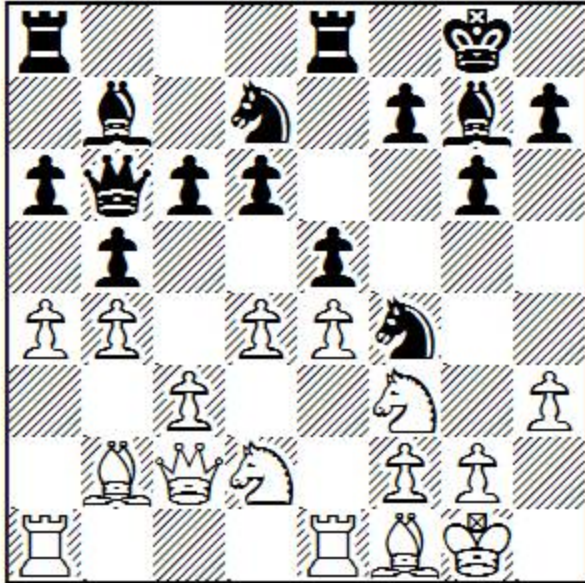
Up till now both sides have been manoeuvring in accordance with time-tested prescriptions.



19 b4!

Apparently, Karpov had this novelty in mind when he played 1 e4. White seizes space on the queenside, prepares c3-c4, and above all restricts Black's activity. This is typical of Karpov, who in almost every game was able to find an arrangement of his pieces which would enable him to restrict the opponent's possibilities and at the same time unhurriedly strengthen his own position.

19 ... Nf4



20 dxe5

It was possible to maintain the tension – 20 Nb3 Rac8 21 Rad1 Ne6 22 Na5 Ba8 23 Qb3 Rcd8 24 Qa2 (A.Sokolov-Notkin, Elista 1994), but Karpov prefers to clarify the situation. The point of this is revealed slightly later.

20 ... Nxe5

If 20 ... dxe5 21 c4 (Karpov) 21 ... bxa4, then 22 c5 Qxb4 23 Ba3 Qa5 24 Nc4 Qc7 25 Nd6 is good for White, or else 22 Qxa4, and it is hard for Black to prevent a subsequent bind: 22 ... a5? will not do on account of 23 bxa5! Qxb2 24 Reb1 Qc3 25 Rc1!

21 Nxe5 dxe5

Black is forced to shut in his bishop, since he fails to equalise after 21 ... Bxe5 22 Nf3 (22 c4!?) 22 ... Bg7 23 Qd2 (Karpov).

22 c4

In contrast to its opposite number, the bishop at b2 becomes active, and Black is faced with solving some difficult strategic problems.

22 ... Rad8

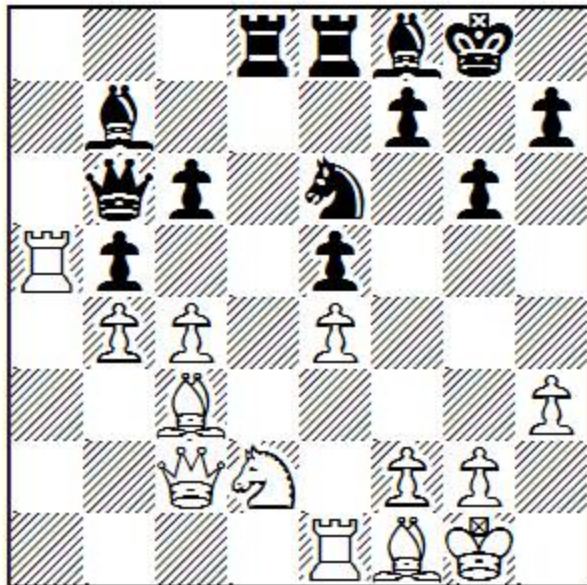
Activating the bishop at b7 by 22 ... c5 is unfavourable in view of 23 cxb5! cxb4 24 a5 Qf6 25 b6. Beliavsky is concerned about the uncertain state of his queenside pawns, and he provokes c4-c5, stabilising the pawn structure.

three on one wing) 30 Rxe8+ Rxe8 31 Qd3 Qxc5 32 Nd2 Rd8 33 Qe3 Ne6 it is not easy for White to convert his extra pawn.

Therefore 26 Qb3!, continuing to build up the initiative, is preferable, for example: 26 ... Bc8 27 Rea1 Be6 28 Qe3 f6 29 Ra7 Qb8 30 Na5!? (30 Nxe5!? is also interesting: 30 ... fxe5 31 Rxg7+ Kxg7 32 Qxf4 Bf7 33 Ra5, or 30 ... Nxh3+ 31 gxh3 fxe5 32 Qc5) 30 ... Qxb4 31 Bc3 Qf8 32 Nxc6 Rd7 33 Rxd7 Bxd7 34 Bb4 Qf7 35 Ra7.

25 Bc3! (but not 25 c5? Bxc5) **25 ... Ne6!**

It was on this move that Black was pinning all his hopes. Capturing on c4 would have led to the loss of the e5-pawn without any compensation.



26 Nf3!

If 26 cxb5, then 26 ... Nd4!, initiating active play in the centre at the cost of a pawn. It is true that after 27 Bxd4 both 27 ... Qxd4 28 Nf3! Qxb4 29 Ra7 (29 ... Re7 30 Rb1! Qd6 31 b6) and 27 ... Rxd4 28 Nc4 Qd8 (28 ... Qc7 29 b6 Qb8 30 Qc3) 29 bxc6 Bxb4 30 cxb7 (Karpov) are insufficient for Black. But 27 ... exd4! 28 Nc4 d3! 29 Qxd3! would lead by force to one of the two following endings, where Black retains real chances of saving the game:

1) 29 ... Rxd3 30 Nxb6 Bxb4 31 Ra7! (Karpov) 31 ... Ra3 32 Rxa3 Bxa3 33 Nc4 Bc5 34 Rc1 cxb5 35 Na5 Rc8 36 Nxb7 Bxf2+ 37 Kxf2 Rxc1 38 Bxb5;

2) 29 ... Qxa5 30 bxa5 Rxd3 31 Bxd3 cxb5 32 Nb6 Bb4 33 Ra1 Bc3 34 Ra2 Re6 35 Nd5 Bxd5 36 exd5 Ra6 37 d6! Rxd6 38 Bxb5 Rd1+ 39 Kh2 Ra1 40 Rxa1 Bxa1 41 a6 Bd4 etc.

Karpov found a more interesting possibility, involving the strategic plan of shutting in the bishop at b7 and exploiting his spatial advantage. At the same time Black even acquires a passed pawn in the centre, supported by the rook at d8, and the rook at e8 comes into play. But Karpov calculated that the activity of the black pieces would be temporary, whereas White's activity, in view of the threat of advancing the e-pawn and opening up the position of the black king, would be far more long-term and dangerous.

26 ... Nd4 27 Bxd4 exd4 28 c5 Qc7

For complete happiness Black only needs to make one more move – ... Bc8, and it is hard to imagine that he will not in fact manage to make it.

29 Ra7! Qb8

To inhibit the advance of the white e-pawn, Beliavsky tries to activate his d-pawn. In fact 29 ... Bg7 30 e5 (Karpov) would have been quite acceptable for Black: 30 ... Qb8 31 Qa2 Rd5 (31 ... d3? 32 e6), and the invasion 32 Qa5 Re7 33 Qb6 is not fatal for him – 33 ... d3 34 Rd1 d2 35 g3 (it is no better to play 35 Rxd2 Rxd2 36 Nxd2 Bxe5, and if 37 Ne4?, then 37 ... Bh2+ 38 Kh1 Rxe4 39 Rxb7 Qf4) 35 ... Qc7 36 Rxd2 Rxd2 37 Nxd2 Bxe5 38 Nb3 (or 38 Qxc7 Rxc7 39 Nb3 Bc3 40 Na5 Bxb4 41 Nxb7 Kg7 42 Ra6 with equality) 38 ... Qd7! 39 Na5 Bxg3! 40 Nxb7 Bxf2+ with perpetual check.

However, White would not have been obliged to force events, and 30 Bd3! Ra8 31 Rxa8 Bxa8 32 Ra1 would leave him with an obvious positional advantage.

30 Qa2 d3

Consistent, although a more restrained course of action was still possible: 30 ... Bg7 31 Bd3 Rd7 32 Qa5 Bf6 33 g3 Bd8 34 Qa2 with advantage to White.

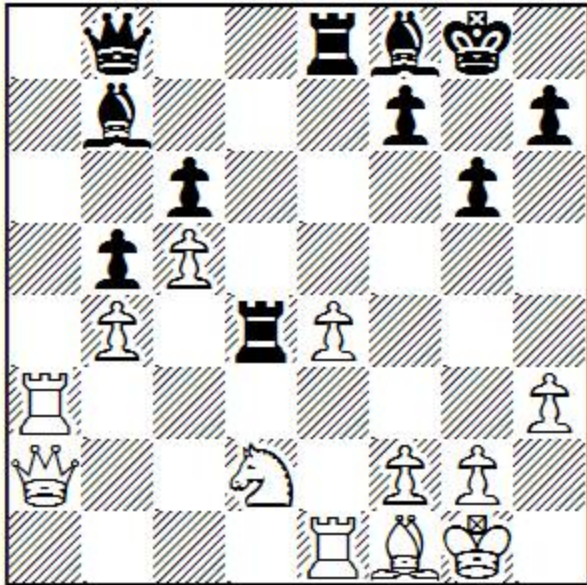
31 Ra3! (31 e5?! was weaker: 31 ... d2 32 Rd1 Bh6! Karpov) **31 ... d2**

With this and his next move Beliavsky maintains material equality, but this leads to a rapid collapse. It would seem that, by abandoning the pawn to its fate – 31 ... Bg7!? 32 Rxd3 (32 Bxd3 Qf4) 32 ... Rxd3 33 Bxd3 Bc8, he could have made things much harder for his opponent.

32 Nxd2 Rd4?

This essentially loses by force! The best practical chance was again to try and set up a defence a pawn down: 32 ... Bc8 33 Nf3 Be6.

Now too, at first sight, things are not so bad for Black: a pawn is attacked, his queen wants to leap to f4, and his bishop has not lost hope of reaching e6. But Karpov's next move shows that these are not real intentions, but belated dreams.



33 e5! Rxb4 (not 33 ... Rxe5? 34 Rxe5 Qxe5 because of the fork 35 Nf3) **34 e6!**

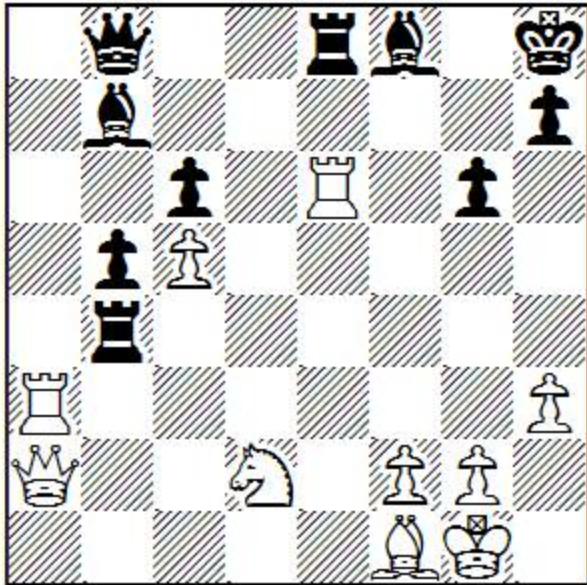
Very energetic. The swift invasion of the opponent's position brings White an impressive win.

34 Ne4 appears stronger, when if 34 ... Re6 (34 ... Qxe5? 35 Ng5!) White has the paralysing 35 Nd6. But Black gives up the exchange – 34 ... Rxe4! 35 Rxe4 Rxe5 36 Rxe5 Qxe5 37 Rf3 Qe7 38 Rd3 Bc8 39 Qa8 Bf5 40 Rd6 Qe5, obtaining a perfectly defensible position.

34 ... fxe6

The alternative was 34 ... Kg7 35 Qa1+ f6, when to retain a great and then decisive advantage White would have had to find a rather lengthy solution, the first half of which would have comprised nervy, pre-time control moves: 36 Ne4! Rxe6 37 Ng5 Rxe1 38 Qxe1 Ra4 (of course, not 38 ... fxg5? 39 Qxb4 Karpov) 39 Ne6+ Kg8 40 Rd3! Qe5 41 Re3 Qb2 42 Qd1! Ra2 43 Re2 Qa1 44 Qd8 Ra8 45 Qc7 and wins.

35 Rxe6 Kh8



36 Rae3!

This rook, the invasion of which at a7 so frightened Black, unexpectedly switches to the e-file.

36 ... Rxe6?

36 ... Qa8! was far more tenacious. After 37 Qc2 Rxe6 38 Rxe6 Black can transfer his heavy pieces to the field of battle, but his light-squared bishop, stuck on the queenside, is unable to render any assistance: if 38 ... Bg7, then the unexpected 39 Nc4!! with the threat of Qe4(2) is decisive, and he is also not saved by 38 ... Qd8 39 Ne4 Qd7 40 Rf6! Bg7 41 Rf3 Rd4 42 Nd6 or 38 ... Rd4 39 Qc3 Bg7 40 Qe3 Rd8 41 Ne4 (41 Nf3 Rf8 42 Re7 Bc8 43 Ne5 is also good) 41 ... Bc8 (41 ... Re8 42 Nd6 Rxe6 43 Qxe6) 42 Re7 Rf8 43 Nd6 Qa2 44 Nxc8 Rxc8 45 Re8+ Rxe8 46 Qxe8+ Qg8 47 Qxc6 Qf8 (47 ... b4 48 Qb7) 48 Qd5 and wins.

37 Qxe6 Rf4 (37 ... Bxc5 38 Qf6+ and Rd3 Karpov) 38 Ne4 Qd8?

In time-trouble Black blunders a rook, but, in view of the unavoidable invasion of the knight at f6 or d6, there was no longer any way of saving the game: 38 ... Bg7(h6) 39 Nd6! etc.

39 Qe5+ 1-0

The bishop at b7 is a silent reproach to Black's strategy. Karpov's accurate and confident play at the most tense moment of the game creates a great impression.

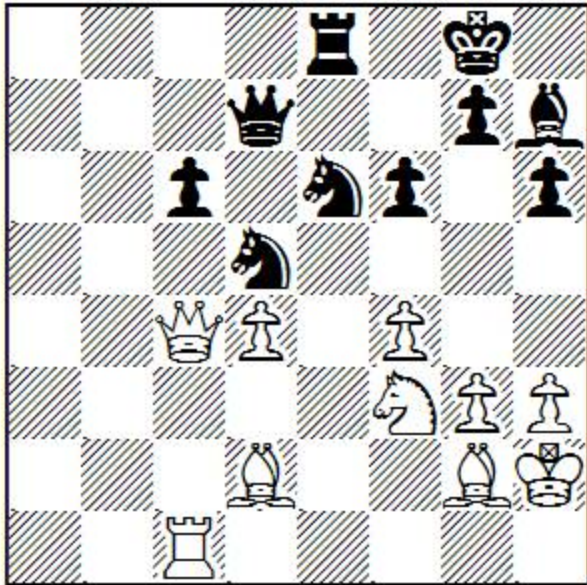
In this double-round tournament of eight grandmasters Karpov twice(!) defeated Korchnoi and Shirov, and in the end he finished first by a big margin – $10\frac{1}{2}$ out of 14 (+8–1=5). It is evident that he was striving to demonstrate to himself and to the whole world that it was rather early to write him off ...

And in Linares (February-March 1994), now the FIDE world champion, he tried his utmost to show that his official title, acquired in the match with Timman, ‘weighed’ no less than my historic title, confirmed by my victory over Short.

Karpov had one other powerful stimulus: of all the traditional super-tournaments in which he had ever taken part, for some reason he had been least successful in Linares: 1st-2nd (1981), 2nd-3rd (1983), 2nd (1989), 7th-8th (1991), 4th (1992), and 2nd-3rd (1993). Moreover, in 1992 and 1993 I had finished first with the identical result of 10 out of 13, while Karpov had correspondingly finished $2\frac{1}{2}$ and $1\frac{1}{2}$ points behind me. As V. and I. Linder write, ‘it would appear that all these comparative failures stirred up in him a passionate desire to win the Linares tournament, which by this time had become a kind of litmus test of “who’s who” in the chess world.’

As it later transpired, a far from unimportant role was played by the pairings, which placed us alongside each other: I drew No.10 and Karpov No.11. Thus all the participants except one (Lautier) had to play us in turn. Averbakh: ‘It may be that this is the secret of Karpov’s superb result: his opponents, who had just grappled with Kasparov, were pretty much worn out.’ However, the miracle that occurred can hardly be explained by this or by the staggering good fortune which accompanied the FIDE champion from the very start.

‘One’s mood is affected by luck,’ – Karpov was to say after the tournament. This thought was confirmed in the very first round, when with Black in a time scramble he snatched victory against Lautier.



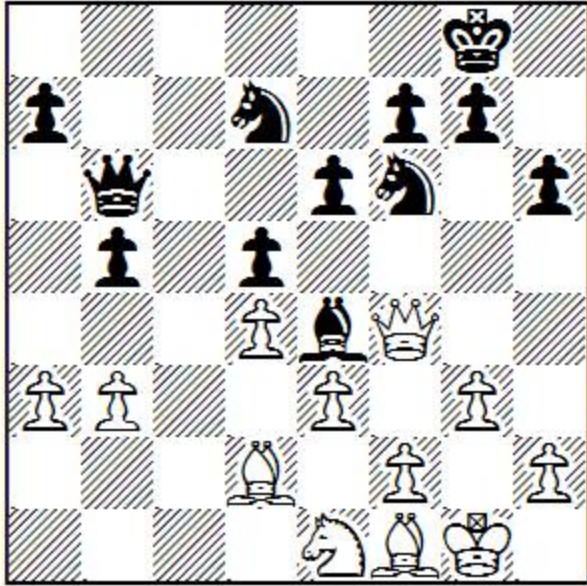
39 ... **Be4?! (instead of the calm 39 ... Nd8) 40 Qxc6?**

With the simple 40 **Ne5! fxe5 41 Bxe4 exf4 42 Qxc6 fxg3+ 43 Kxg3** White would have forced a draw from a position of strength – 43 ... **Rd8** (Karpov).

40 ... **Qxc6 41 Rxc6 Ndx4! (of course!) 42 Rd6 Nxg2 43 Kxg2 Nc7! (not 43 ... Ng5 44 Bxg5 fxg5 45 Ra6! with equality – Karpov) 44 Kf2 Ra8 45 Be3 Nb5! 46 Rb6 Nc3 47 Rb3? (disheartened by his blunder on the time control move, Lautier loses without a fight) 47 ... Nd1+ 48 Ke2 Bd5! (or 48 ... Bc2! 49 Rb7 Re8) 49 Rd3 (49 Rb6 Nxe3) 49 ... Bc4 0-1**

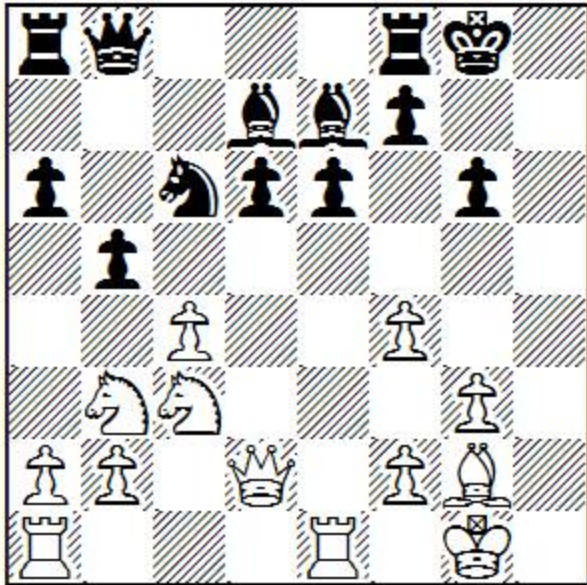
In the 2nd round Karpov 'took over' Bareev from me and, knowing his attachment to the French Defence, after 1 **e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 Nd2 c5 4 exd5 exd5 5 Ngf3 Nf6 6 Bb5+ Bd7 7 Bxd7+ Nbx7 8 0-0 Be7 9 dxc5 Nxc5 10 Nd4** he initiated his favourite play against the isolated pawn. Bareev equalised, but five moves before the time control, now in a dead-drawn position, he inexplicably blundered a rook, allowing mate in one move!

So, we both started with two wins, and in the 3rd round we both had Black: I made a draw with Topalov, but Karpov played the opening badly against Illescas and then ... trapped his queen in the middle of the board!



26 Bb4? (26 g4 was essential) 26 ... a5! 27 Be7 e5! (a surprise: if 28 dxe5?, then 28 ... g5! and wins) 28 Qh4 exd4 29 Qf4 dxe3 30 Qxe3 d4, and although Black later lost his advantage, Illescas missed a way to draw and the passed d-pawn decided matters.

In the 4th round I managed to beat Ivanchuk in impressive style, but Karpov also seriously warmed up, prettily crushing Topalov. This game was deemed the best in the 60th volume of *Informator* and, along with Game Nos.67, 71 and 79 it rightly found its way into the well-known book *The World's Greatest Chess Games*.



18 Nc5! dxc5 (18 ... Be8 19 Nxe6! fxe6 20 Rxe6 is also bad for Black) 19 Qxd7 Rc8 20 Rxe6! (a striking blow) 20 ... Ra7 21 Rxc6+! fxg6 (there is nothing else) 22 Qe6+ Kg7 23 Bxc6 Rd8 24 cxb5 Bf6 25 Ne4 Bd4 26 bxa6 Qb6 27 Rd1 Qxa6 28 Rxd4! (Karpov: 'A rare occurrence – for the third successive time a rook is sacrificed!') 28 ... Rxd4 29 Qf6+, and White won (1-0).

In the 5th round I beat Judit Polgar, while Karpov received a 'generous gift' from Ivanchuk, who after a favourable opening suddenly began to 'drift' and, after blundering an important pawn on the 28th move, promptly resigned. In the 6th round with difficulty I saved a half point in my game with Gelfand, while Karpov technically defeated Polgar after employing a 'special weapon': 1 e4 c5 2 c3!? e6 3 d4 d5 4 exd5 exd5 5 Nf3 Nc6 6 Bb5 c4?! 7 Ne5! Qb6 8 Bxc6+ bxc6 9 0-0 Bd6 10 b3! etc. In connection with this game, the words of Igor Zaitsev come to mind: 'Every outstanding grandmaster has his own chess vision, his chess compass, which in the opening does not allow him to go against his inner convictions. Thus Kapengut with Black tried to tempt Karpov with the Modern Benoni, while Sveshnikov tried to persuade him to dip into the quietly flowing waters of the 2 c3 variation in the Sicilian Defence – but all their efforts were in vain!' And for Judit alone did he make an exception ...

Before the 7th round, in which we played each other, Karpov had 6 out of 6(!), with me a point behind. I had the white pieces, and it was

clear that this was the decisive game of the tournament. My trainer Yuri Dokhoian and I spent a long time racking our brains over how to try and breach the Caro-Kann Defence on this occasion. In it I won twice against Karpov in Amsterdam (1988) and twice in Linares (1992 and 2001), but on this occasion, in 1994, something went wrong, and evidently I burned myself out even while preparing for the game. After a badly played opening I then even had to save myself! Averbakh: 'While in the previous two Linares tournaments it was his victories over Karpov that, to a large extent, determined Kasparov's ultimate success, this time it was a case of "diamond cut diamond": the game was drawn and the gap remained unchanged.'

In the 8th round I drew with Shirov, but in time-trouble the inspired leader outplayed Gelfand in a complicated position, although on the 37th move the latter could have set his opponent difficult problems. In the 9th round Karpov failed to win a better ending against Shirov, while I managed to beat Kamsky and to reduce the deficit: I now had 7 points, but Karpov had 8!

In the 10th round – a rare occurrence – luck deserted my rival: after gaining an endgame with an extra pawn and winning chances against Kamsky, he threw away the advantage with his hasty 33rd move ... However, this did not help me: trying at all costs to win with Black against the new star of Russian chess Vladimir Kramnik, I played the King's Indian Defence too riskily, overstepped the mark, came under attack and lost.

In Averbakh's opinion, 'The question of first place was effectively decided by Kramnik: after defeating Kasparov, in the next round he lost to Karpov.' Before the game Vladimir, who was then not yet 19 years old, stated in an interview: 'In this tournament Karpov has been very aggressive, often going in for dubious positions. If he plays like this against me, I have a chance of beating him.' But Karpov did not give him such a chance.

Game 103

A.Karpov-V.Kramnik

Linares 1994, 11th round

Semi-Slav Defence D48

1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 Nf3 Nf6 4 Nc3 e6 5 e3 Nbd7

At that time Kramnik regularly employed the 'Meran' and he felt very much at home in it.

6 Bd3 (6 Qc2 – *Game Nos.95 and 96*) **6 ... dxc4 7 Bxc4 b5 8 Bd3 a6**

In the 9th round game Karpov-Shirov after 8 ... Bb7 9 a3 b4 10 Ne4 a5?! 11 Nxf6+ Nxf6 12 e4 Be7 13 Qe2 c5 14 Bb5+ Kf8 15 dxc5 Bxc5 16 Bd3 White gained an advantage. 10 ... Nxe4 11 Bxe4 bxa3 12 bxa3 Bd6 equalises, as played later against Karpov by Kramnik (Dortmund 1995; Monaco rapidplay 1996) and Anand (3rd matchgame, Lausanne 1998).

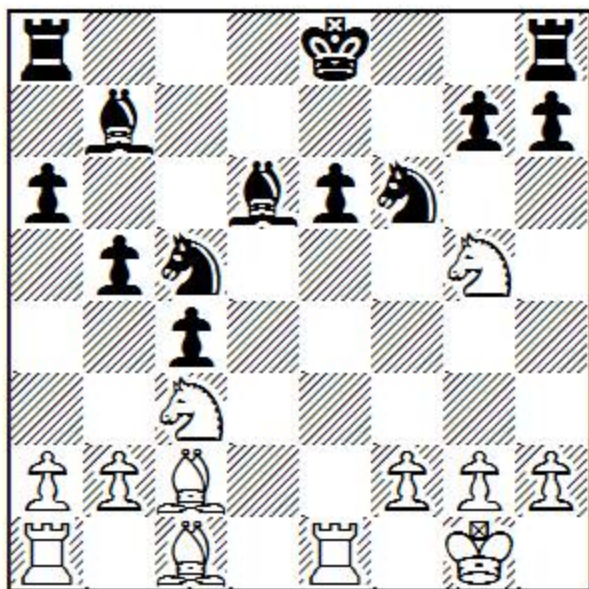
9 e4 c5 10 d5 c4

A month later in Monaco, Kramnik replied 10 ... Qc7 11 0-0 Bb7 12 dxe6 fxe6 13 Bc2 Be7 (cf. *Game No.105*, note to Black's 13th move).

11 dxe6 fxe6 (11 ... cxd3 – *Game No.80*) **12 Bc2 Bb7** (12 ... Qc7 13 0-0 Bc5 has also been tried) **13 0-0 Qc7 14 Ng5**

The alternative is 14 Nd4 or 14 Qe2 (*Game No.105*). 'White must hasten to seek active continuations. If he does not succeed in exploiting his temporary lead in development, Black's active pawns on the queenside, together with the open lines and diagonals, will enable him to seize the initiative.' (Karpov)

14 ... Nc5 (14 ... Qc6?! 15 Qf3! Gligoric-Ljubojevic, Linares 1991) **15 e5!** (a novelty from the early 1990s) **15 ... Qxe5 16 Re1 Qd6 17 Qxd6 Bxd6**



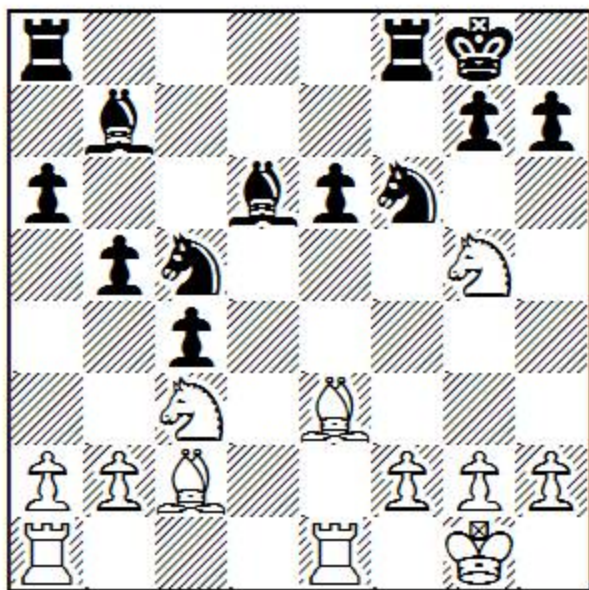
Kramnik went in for this position without hesitation, probably thinking that he knew it 'in all its details'. But here he encountered an original idea, of a strategic, rather than tactical nature – involving the subtle interpretation of a non-standard endgame.

18 Be3!

A surprise! Previously only 18 Nxe6 Nxe6 19 Rxe6+ Kd7 20 Re2 Rae8 (20 ... b4!?) or 20 Bf5 Kc7 had occurred, and the initiative even passed to Black. Karpov opens a new page in the development of the variation, deferring the pawn capture for the sake of rapid mobilisation.

18 ... 0-0

A natural move, although Kramnik thought over it for about 50 minutes. He was evidently wondering what unpleasant surprises might await him in the event of the equally natural reply 18 ... Nd3!? 19 Bxd3 cxd3. After 20 Nxe6 (Ftacnik) 20 ... Kf7 Black would be satisfied with either 21 Nf4 b4 22 Na4 Bxf4 23 Bxf4 Rac8!, or 21 Bc5 d2! 22 Re2 b4 23 Na4 Bc6 24 Nb6 Bxc5 25 Nxa8 Bb5. 20 Rad1!, picking up both the d3-pawn and the e6-pawn, is better, for example: 20 ... 0-0 21 Rxd3 Bd5 22 Nxe6 Bxh2+ 23 Kxh2 Bxe6 24 Rd6 Rfe8 (Kramnik–Kuczynski, Bundesliga 1994) 25 Bd2 with an insignificant advantage.

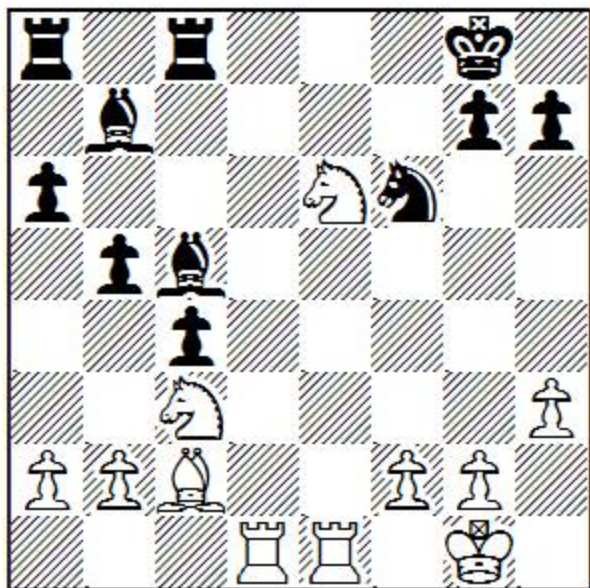


19 Rad1 Be7 (of course, not 19 ... Rfd8? 20 Rxd6 and Bxc5) **20 Bxc5 Bxc5 21 Nxe6 Rfc8 22 h3!**

After 22 Nxc5 Rxc5 23 Re7 Rb8 (Karpov) or 23 ... Bc6 (Ftacnik), as well as 22 a3 Bb6! 23 Nxg7 Ng4 24 Rf1 Rd8! (Gelfand-Illescas, Dos Hermanas 1995) Black successfully defends.

The modest, typically Karpov move 22 h3 prepares a large-scale offensive on the kingside. The main aim is to drive the knight from f6. After this, having gained access to the squares e4, d5 and d7, White can extract benefit from the strong position of his knight at e6 and his rooks on the central files.

On encountering a 'venomous' problem, which has no forced solution, under conditions of restricted time for thought, Kramnik was unable to fully figure out the subtleties of the resulting position.



22 ... Bf8?

An obvious, but weak move. 22 ... Ba7? 23 Nxg7! b4 24 Na4 is even worse. Later 22 ... Bb4 was tried, but Korchnoi's recommendation 22 ... Rab8! (intending ... Ba7) is better – Black maintains the balance after both 23 g4 Bf3 24 Rd2 b4 (later he switched to 24 ... Re8!?) 25 Na4 Ba7! 26 g5 Nd5 (Nikolic-Bareev, Munich 1994) and 23 Nxc5 Rxc5 24 Re6 b4 25 Na4 Rg5! (Kramnik-Shirov, Novgorod 1994) or 24 Rd6 b4 25 Na4 Rd5 (Gelfand-Shirov, Biel 1995).

Nevertheless, 18 Be3 was judged to be the most important theoretical novelty in the 60th issue of *Informator* – and thus two games by the victor in Linares (with Topalov and Kramnik) came top in the two

nominations. Karpov: 'A very rare occurrence in the history of these competitions!'

23 g4 h6

Black would like to nail the f-pawn to the f2-square, but after 23 ... Bf3 24 Rd4! all the same he has a difficult position. Thus if 24 ... b4?! 25 Na4 the weakness of the c4-pawn causes his downfall: 25 ... Rab8 (if 25 ... Nd5? Karpov gives 26 Re5 'etc.', but 26 Ng5! is far simpler) 26 Nxf8 Kxf8 (26 ... Rxf8 27 Rxc4) 27 Rf4 (Ftacnik) or 24 ... Rab8 25 Nb6 Rc6 (25 ... Re8 26 Nxf8 and Nxc4) 26 Nd7! Nxd7 27 Rxd7 with the threat of Bxh7+ or Nxf8 and Ree7.

24 f4! (exploiting the fact that the black bishop has left the a7-g1 diagonal) **24 ... Bf3**

Black drives the rook off the 1st rank, so that a possible opposition of rooks on the e-file should also cause White some concern.

25 Rd2

'25 Rd4 looks more energetic, with the idea of 25 ... Bc6?! 26 g5 hxg5 27 fxg5 Nd7 28 Rh4, and Black's king is in a mating net. However, after 25 ... Re8 he is threatening ... Rxe6 and ... Bc5 or immediately ... Bc5.' (Karpov). True, here too after 26 Kf2 Rxe6 (or 26 ... Bb7 27 Nxf8) 27 Rxe6 Bc5 28 Kxf3 Bxd4 29 Nd1 White has the better endgame.

25 ... Bc6

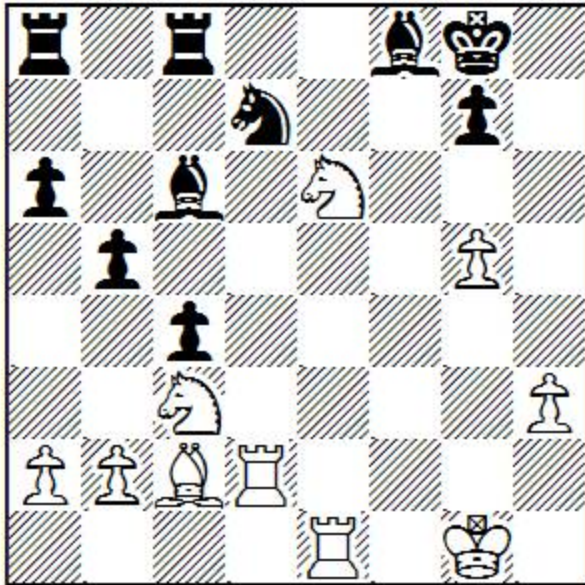
Kramnik secures the d7-square for his knight, not wishing after 25 ... b4 26 Na4 Rab8 (26 ... c3?! 27 bxc3 bxc3 28 Rf2 Bd5 29 Nb6 Bxe6 30 Rxe6 Bc5 31 Nxa8 Rxa8 32 Rc6 and wins – Ftacnik) 27 g5 hxg5 28 fxg5 to have to move it to the edge of the board.

Indeed, in the event of 28 ... Nh5 29 Bg6 Bc6 (29 ... b3 30 axb3 Bb4 31 Rf2 Bxe1 32 Rxf3 Rxb3 33 Bf7+ Kh8 34 Bxh5 Rxf3 35 Bxf3 c3 could have helped Black to gain a draw, but after 30 a3! things are bad for him, since 30 ... Bxa3?! 31 bxa3 c3 32 Nxc3 Rxc3 33 Nd8 does not work) 30 Bxh5 Bxa4 31 Rf1! White unexpectedly threatens a mating attack (Bf7 and Rf4) and after 31 ... Rb7 (31 ... Bc5+ 32 Kg2! Bc6+ 33 Kg3 is worse for Black) 32 Rd4 he wins at least a pawn.

Black would have had to play 28 ... Nh7 in the hope of 29 h4 b3 30 axb3 Bb4 31 Nc3 Bxc3 32 bxc3 cxb3, but the accurate 29 Rd4! parries any attempts based on tactical nuances, and maintains a dominating position for White.

26 g5 hxg5 27 fxg5 Nd7

Not 27 ... Nh5? (Korchnoi) 28 Bg6 Ng3 29 Kh2 and wins (Ftacnik).



28 Nxf8!

A transformation of advantages: the knight was preventing the invasion of the rooks, and Karpov gives it up without regret.

28 ... Nxf8 (after **28 ... Rxf8 29 Re6!** Black faces virtually insoluble problems) **29 Rd6! b4**

An attempt to create counterplay. Finding himself under positional pressure, Kramnik is forced to seek a way out of an unpleasant situation: there are no variations leading to a loss, but also no ways of easing the defence with the help of exchanges. Thus after **29 ... Re8** (Korchnoi) **30 Rxe8 Bxe8** White dominates in the centre and has a whole range of tempting continuations.

30 Ne4

Karpov takes his knight to f5, hoping to create irresistible threats to the king. **30 Nd5!** (Karpov) **30 ... Bxd5 31 Rxd5** was technically more forceful, remaining with a powerful bishop against a knight. Fischer would have played this without thinking! Then it is bad to play **31 ... c3 32 g6!** (Ftacnik) **32 ... cxb2 33 Bb3 Rc3 34 Rb1!** or **31 ... Rd8** (C.Hansen) **32 Rc5 Rac8 33 Rxc4! Rxc4 34 Bb3**, winning a pawn and the game, but even after the more tenacious **31 ... Rab8 32 Rd4(6)** Black has little chance of gaining a draw.

30 ... Be8

30 ... Bxe4 31 Bxe4 or 30 ... Nd7 31 Ng3! was worse. In Karpov's opinion, '30 ... Bd7 31 h4 Rc6 was necessary, when Black can still breathe' But only with difficulty: 32 Rxc6 Bxc6 33 Nd6 Bd5 34 Re5! Be6 35 Ra5 etc. And if 30 ... Ra7, then 31 Rd4!, combining working on the pawn weaknesses with an attack on the king: 31 ... Bd7 32 Nd6, or 31 ... Ba8 32 g6!

31 Ng3! Rd8

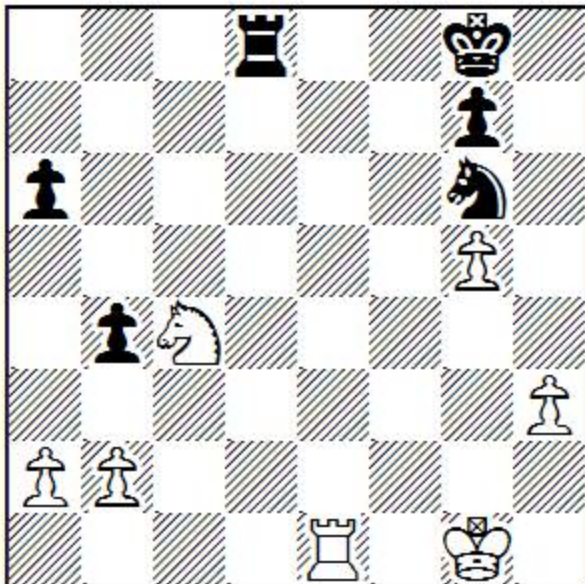
Now 31 ... Bd7 will not do on account of 32 Re7 Bxh3 33 Nh5 (Karpov) or 32 Be4. And if 31 ... c3 (C.Hansen) White wins by 32 Nf5! cxb2 33 Ne7+ Kh8 34 Nxc8 Rxc8 35 Rd2 (Ftacnik).

32 Nf5 Rxd6 (32 ... a5? 33 Be4 etc.) 33 Nxd6 Bg6?

In time-trouble Kramnik gives up a pawn, although Black could still have defended while maintaining equal material: 33 ... Bf7 (Ernst) 34 Nxf7 Kxf7 35 Re4 Rc8 36 b3!? cxb3 37 Rf4+! Ke8 38 Bxb3 a5 39 Rf5, or 33 ... Bd7!? 34 h4! Be6 35 Re4 (Ftacnik) – White's position is better, but this is not yet the end, and perhaps he would have had cause to regret the missed opportunity 30 Nd5!

34 Bxg6 Nxg6 35 Nxc4 Rd8

'35 ... Rf8 was suicidal: 36 Re4! Nf4 (36 ... Rf3 37 Kg2) 37 h4 Kh7 38 Ne5.' (Karpov)



36 Re4! (neutralising Black's counterplay and preparing h3-h4) 36 ... b3 (comparatively the best chance; after 36 ... Rd3 37 Kg2 White wins)

37 axb3

According to Karpov, 37 a4 was more logical, subsequently winning the a-pawn.

37 ... Rd3 (Black pins his hopes on the limited amount of material remaining, but in vain) **38 Kg2**

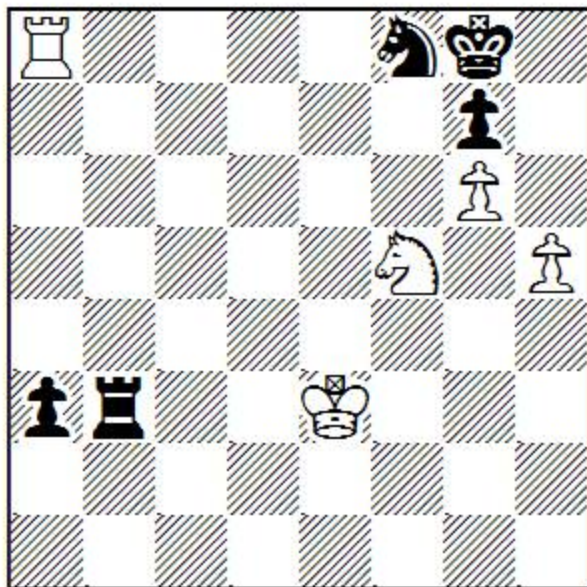
38 Re3 would also have won, for example: **38 ... Rxe3 39 Nxe3 Nf4 40 h4** (and if **40 ... Nd3**, then **41 Kf1!**), or **38 ... Rd5** (C.Hansen) **39 Rg3 Nf4 40 Kh2**.

38 ... Rxb3 39 h4 Nf8?!

After the more tenacious **39 ... Kf8** Karpov would have replied **40 h5 Ne7 41 Re5**. Curt Hansen recommended **39 ... Rb4**, when **40 h5 Ne5** would have given Black drawing chances in the rook ending, but the knight endgame after **40 Kg3! Ne5 41 Nd6 Rxe4 42 Nxe4 Kf7 43 Nc5 a5 44 h5** (Ftacnik) or **42 ... Nd3 43 b3 g6 44 Kf3** is lost for him.

40 Re8!

and Black lost on time (1-0). After the approximate **40 ... Kf7** (if **40 ... Rb4**, both **41 Rc8** and **41 Ne5 Rxb2+ 42 Kf3** are good) **41 Nd6+!** (Karpov) **41 ... Kg8 42 g6 Rxb2+ 43 Kf3 Rb6** White would still have had to overcome certain problems in order to win. He needs to shut in the black king and capture the a-pawn: **44 Rd8 a5 45 h5 a4 46 Nf5 Rb3+ (46 ... Rf6 47 Kg4 Re6 48 Ra8 Rf6 49 Kg5 Re6 50 Nxg7!) 47 Kf4 Rb4+ 48 Kg5 Rb5 49 Ra8! a3 50 Kf4 Rb4+ 51 Ke3 Rb3+.**



Analysis diagram

Ljubomir Ftacnik's analysis concludes with the variation 52 Ke2 Rb2+ 53 Ke1 Rb1+ 54 Kd2 Rf1 55 Ne7+ Kh8 56 Rxa3 Ne6 57 Ra6 Nf8 58 Ra8 and the evaluation '+-'. It is probable that White does indeed have a winning position, but his last move allows the opponent to exploit stalemate motifs – 58 ... Rd1+! 59 Ke3 Rd8! Therefore, in my view, 58 Nc6! and only then Ra8 is more accurate.

It is possible that 52 Kd4 Rb4+ 53 Kc5 wins more quickly, for example: 53 ... Rf4 54 Ne7+ Kh8 55 Kd5 Rf3 56 Ke4 Rf6 57 Nf5 Re6+ 58 Kf4 Kg8 59 Rxa3 Re8 60 Ra7 Ne6+ 61 Kg4 Rf8 (61 ... Kh8 62 h6) 62 Re7 Rf6 63 Re8+ Nf8 64 Kg5 Kh8 65 Nxg7 – curtains!

It is interesting that a position with the same forces – rook, knight and two pawns (at g6 and h5) against rook, knight and g7-pawn, but with the knight at g8 – occurred in the game Kramnik-Krasenkow (Wijk aan Zee 2003) and also ended in a win for White.

After this win the fate of the tournament was finally decided. Subsequently Karpov made a draw with Anand and crushed Beliavsky in a Catalan. He was always a difficult opponent for the famous Ukrainian grandmaster, as is indicated by Game Nos.98 and 102, as well as the overall score of their meetings since 1973: +16–3=10 in favour of Anatoly Evgenyevich.

Thus was achieved one of the most outstanding tournament results in the history of chess: 1. Karpov – 11 out of 13 (+9=4); 2-3. Kasparov and Shirov – 8½; 4. Bareev – 7½; 5-6. Kramnik and Lautier – 7; 7-9. Anand, Kamsky and Topalov – 6½; 10. Ivanchuk – 6, etc. When I had not yet cooled down after the battle, I stated: 'This competitive triumph, in my view, was not supported by outstanding play. I have seen Karpov play better. Now he has found an optimal manner of play, which, by virtue of his personal and playing qualities, enables him to achieve the maximum results with the minimal expenditure of nervous energy. A kind of apotheosis of pragmatism!'

The reaction of the chess world was summed up by Averbakh: 'The super-tournament in Linares ended sensationally: Karpov's result brings to mind the legendary successes of Alekhine at San Remo (1930) and Bled (1931), and Botvinnik's triumph in the 1945 USSR Championship (+13=4). Equally sensational was Karpov's unprecedented start: six out of six! It seems that the title of FIDE world champion has given him renewed confidence in his powers. This year Kasparov exactly repeated Karpov's 1993 result, but Karpov leaped

head and shoulders above him!’ As the statisticians reported, this was already his 125th tournament victory!

After this ‘tournament of his life’ Karpov apparently decided that he had now demonstrated everything to everyone, and he even made a bold statement in the press: ‘Yes, I would like to play yet another match with Kasparov, but now he needs this match more than I do.’

However, Karpov’s tournament successes soon began to decline: in April in Dos Hermanas he conceded first place to Gelfand, and in May in Las Palmas to Kamsky (each time scoring +4–1=4), and in the autumn he encountered great problems at the double-round ‘Sicilian’ super-tournament in Buenos Aires, where he only shared 5th-6th places with Kamsky, behind Salov, Anand, Ivanchuk and Polgar.

The participants in this unusual tournament were obliged to begin their games with 1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 and then 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 – only an Open Sicilian! ‘This was an original way of marking the 60th birthday of the outstanding grandmaster Lev Polugayevsky. Although Polugayevsky’s name is associated with an enormous number of novelties, scattered around various sections of chess theory, his contribution to the development of the Sicilian Defence has been the most impressive,’ wrote Zaitsev.

Later, after praising the play of the tournament winners, Karpov’s long-standing trainer commented with his customary tact: ‘The more modest results of the remaining participants can largely be justified by the absence (or loss) of the Sicilian skills necessary for such a fierce battle.’ I think that we have to respect Karpov’s courage, in deciding to test his strength in what was perhaps his most difficult ‘field of work’.

In Linares 1995, where I, Kramnik and Anand did not play, he finished second (+5=8) behind the brilliantly performing Ivanchuk (+7=6), while the result of the double-round Linares 2001 reflected the inexorable march of time: 1. Kasparov – 7½ out of 10; 2-6. Karpov ... – 4½.

King of FIDE

The contesting of the world championship in the mid-1990s was undoubtedly the most intensive and unusual in the history of chess. The challengers battled simultaneously in two series, trying to qualify in the PCA series for a match with me, and in the FIDE series for a match with Karpov. Moreover, according to a peace treaty between FIDE and the

PCA, concluded during the Olympiad and Congress in Moscow (1994), a 'unification' match for the crown was also envisaged.

The favourites in both series were the already experienced 25-year-old Indian Vishy Anand and the rapidly improving 20-year-old 'new American' Gata Kamsky. In January 1994 they distinguished themselves in FIDE matches: Anand beat Yusupov, and Kamsky beat Van der Sterren (in each case by $4\frac{1}{2}$ - $2\frac{1}{2}$). In June both convincingly won their PCA matches: Anand against Romanishin (5-2) and Kamsky against Kramnik ($4\frac{1}{2}$ - $1\frac{1}{2}$).

And then in July a random draw brought them together in a FIDE quarter-final match. This was a fierce battle! Vishy threw away an obvious advantage in the 1st game and a simple win in the 2nd, then he nevertheless scored two wins and was very close to success in the 5th game, but he delayed and by tenacious defence Gata saved half a point. The match was the best of eight games, and it could well have concluded ahead of schedule ... True, the score of $3\frac{1}{2}$ - $1\frac{1}{2}$ also did not herald a sensation. But here something broke down in Anand's well-regulated mechanism (this also happened to him in his matches with me and Karpov). The exceptionally strong-willed Kamsky levelled the scores (4-4) and – miraculously! – finished off his demoralised opponent in the tie-break by 2-0, and this against one of the acknowledged kings of rapidplay chess!

'Kamsky has undoubtedly developed as a player, and his qualitative progress is obvious,' Karpov declared after this. 'But it is my firm conviction that the result of his two matches – with Kramnik and Anand – lies in the field of psychology. The downfall of both Gata's opponents was caused by the fact that they did not take him seriously ...'

But in the September PCA semi-final match, inspired by his success, Gata literally massacred Short ($5\frac{1}{2}$ - $1\frac{1}{2}$) – who had been the 'No.1' challenger of the previous cycle. However, Anand too did not grieve for long after his disappointing defeat in the FIDE cycle: in the other semi-final he crushed Adams by the same score – and again had to meet Kamsky, only this time in the PCA final!

Less than a month after this severe test, in February 1995, in an almost offhand manner (again $5\frac{1}{2}$ - $1\frac{1}{2}$) Kamsky made short work of Salov in a semi-final FIDE match, which also looked impressive, as earlier his opponent had knocked out Khalifman and Timman.

However, Gata was unable to beat the 'Indian miracle-worker' a second time: on this occasion, despite losing on time in a winning

position in the first game, Vishy dominated throughout and won the final PCA match (6½-4½).

Thus my next opponent in the match for the world championship (New York, autumn 1995) became Anand, and I defeated him in a severe struggle: 10½-7½ (+4-1=13). And in the final FIDE world championship match (Elista, summer 1996) Karpov did not leave Kamsky any hopes – also 10½-7½ (but +6-3=9).

It is evident that Karpov ‘took Gata seriously’. Although, initially the outcome of this match of 20 games seemed unclear and puzzling: would the long-standing occupant of the chess summit be able to withstand the onslaught of the staggeringly purposeful leader of the new generation? In this respect Kamsky vividly resembled the young Karpov. But what he definitely lacked was Karpov’s flexibility and depth of positional evaluation, which ultimately decided the match. Gata was not even helped by the fact that his opponent was a whole 23 years older ...

And yet Kamsky was pinning enormous hopes on this match! Back in 1994 reports had appeared in the press that by one or other course – PCA or FIDE (or perhaps both!) he would definitely ‘get through to Kasparov’. Now he had only one chance left – to beat Karpov. And, unusually for him, he even took a lengthy break from playing, devoting a lot of time to preparation. In the match Gata employed many varied openings, evidently hoping that Karpov would no longer be capable of following the rapidly changing evaluations of modern variations. However, despite all his preparation, and his extraordinary hard work, persistence and will-power, Kamsky was unable to put up a genuinely serious resistance against the champion.

The very first game, won by Karpov in his favourite positional style, demonstrated his obvious superiority in manoeuvring. True, Kamsky impressively won the 2nd. Such a start was traditional for the ‘king of FIDE’: he also began with a win and a loss in his match with Timman (1993) and also subsequently with Anand (1998).

There then followed a 50-move draw, and in the 4th game Karpov gained convincing revenge for his defeat in the 2nd: 1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 exd5 cxd5 4 c4 Nf6 5 Nc3 e6 6 Nf3 Bb4 7 cxd5 Nxd5 8 Bd2 Nc6 9 Bd3 0-0 10 0-0 Be7 11 Qe2 Nf6 12 Ne4 Qb6!? (the 2nd game went 12 ... Bd7 13 Rad1 Rc8 14 Rfe1 Nd5 15 Nc3 Nf6 16 a3 Qc7?! 17 Bg5 Qa5?! 18 d5! exd5 19 Bxf6! Bxf6 20 Bxh7+! Kxh7 21 Rxd5 ... 1-0) 13 a3 Bd7 14 Rfd1 Rad8! 15 Nxf6+ Bxf6 16 Qe4 g6 17 Be3 Ne7! ... 0-1.

The press wrote about Karpov's play: 'His manoeuvring strategy proved hard for his 22-year-old opponent to understand.'

After this win the champion maintained his lead throughout and in the subsequent games he dictated matters. And whereas a sharp opening skirmish in the 5th game led to a rapid draw, it is highly probable that the amazing events in the 6th game undermined Kamsky's belief in his ultimate success.

Game 104

G.Kamsky-A.Karpov

FIDE World Championship Match, Elista 1996, 6th game

Petroff Defence C43

1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nf6

This temporary rejection of the Caro-Kann in favour of a solid reserve opening should not have surprised Gata.

3 d4 (at that time this variation was very popular; **3 Nxe5** – *Game No.88*) **3 ... Nxe4 4 Bd3 d5 5 Nxe5 Nd7 6 Nxd7**

But not **6 Qe2 Nxe5!** etc., as in the well-known game Karpov-Larsen (*Volume 4, Game No.48*).

6 ... Bxd7 7 0-0 Bd6

'Karpov has his own way – he does not launch into the sharp variations after **7 ... Qh4 8 c4 0-0-0 9 c5 g5.**' (Beliavsky, Mikhalchishin)

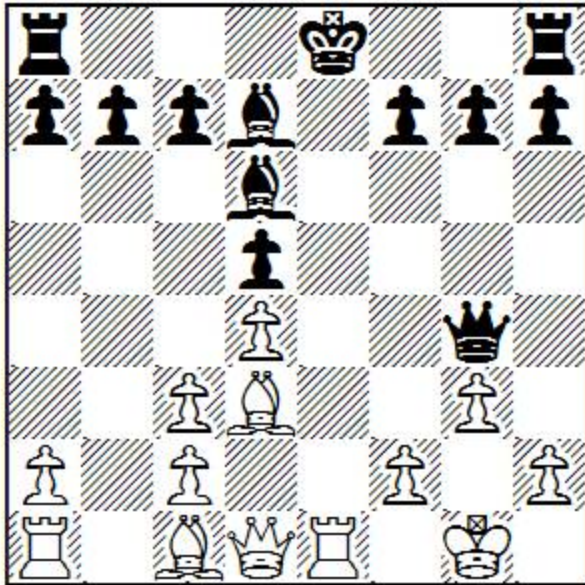
8 Nc3

A move which became fashionable after the example set by grandmaster Kharlov. The main line was and still is **8 c4!** (cf. *Volume 4, Game No.48*, note to White's 6th move).

8 ... Qh4

Karpov thought about this risky sortie for 42 minutes. Later **8 ... Nxc3 9 bxc3 0-0 10 Qh5 f5** was considered to be a reliable way to equalise, as, for example, played against Shirov by Kramnik (Belgrade 1997; 2nd matchgame, Cazorla 1998) and Anand (2nd matchgame, Groningen 1997).

9 g3 Nxc3 10 bxc3 Qg4?! (**10 ... Qh3 11 Re1+ Be6** is nevertheless more solid, with the idea of **12 Rb1 0-0-0**, while the recommendation by Beliavsky and Mikhalchishin, **12 Bf1 Qf5 13 g4**, is dubious in view of **13 ... Qf6!**) **11 Re1+**



11 ... Kd8!?

‘A valuable novelty’ (Karpov), continuing the same risky strategy. This move, like 10 ... Qg4, was made instantly – it was all decided while Black was considering his 8th move. ‘The loss of castling does at all not concern the present-day Karpov.’ (Beliavsky, Mikhalchishin). Wouldn’t you agree that in some way this resembles the bold and unusual playing manner of Steinitz and Lasker?

The normal 11 ... Kf8 would have led after 12 Be2 Qf5 (Magem-Illescas, Pamplona 1995) 13 Rb1! followed by c3-c4 to problems for Black in view of the disrupted coordination of his pieces. It appears that after the unusual move in the game it will be even harder for him to connect his rooks. But Karpov thinks that the most important thing is to bring his h8-rook into play quickly, and then connect the rooks later, in an original way. And, what is very typical, is that he succeeds in carrying out his audacious idea!

12 Be2

Kamsky, naturally, tries to punish his opponent: with the queens on White can hope for an attack. The endgame after 12 Qxg4 Bxg4 13 Rb1 b6 14 c4 c6 (M.Gurevich) or 13 ... Rb8 (Ftacnik) 14 c4 (14 Kg2 Kd7) 14 ... dxc4 15 Bxc4 f6 would not have promised White much.

12 ... Qf5 13 Rb1 (13 c4!? Karpov) 13 ... b6

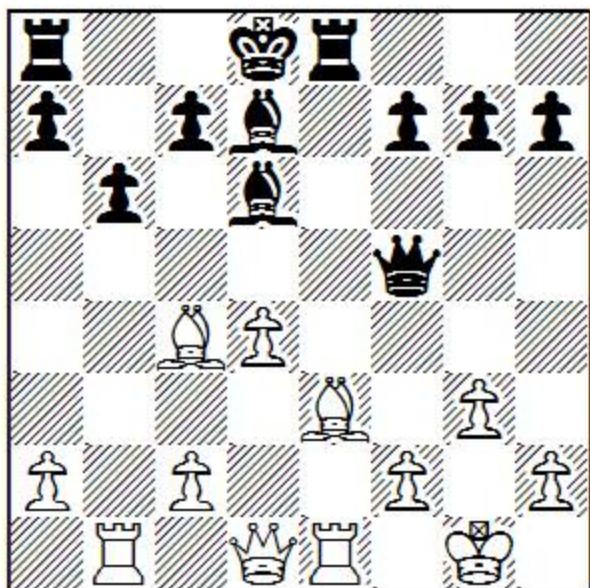
In the event of 13 ... Kc8 14 c4 dxc4 15 Bxc4 h5 16 h4 Black would have remained in difficulties, and so he sticks to a different plan.

14 c4 dxc4 (14 ... c6?! 15 c5! and c2-c4 Karpov) 15 Bxc4 Re8!

After 15 ... h5 16 Bd3 Qg4 17 Be2 and Bf3! (Karpov) White would have switched his bishop onto 'its' diagonal with gain of tempo, and his attack in the centre would have been far more dangerous than Black's flank diversion.

16 Be3

Blocking the e-file and avoiding exchanges, in order to exploit the disharmony in Black's forces. After 16 Rxe8+ Kxe8 17 Bd3 (17 Qe2+ Kf8 is equal) 17 ... Qd5 18 c4 Qxd4 19 Bb2 Qg4 (M.Gurevich) the position of the black king in the centre is invulnerable, and White probably has nothing better than to exchange queens and regain the pawn, with a roughly equal endgame.



16 ... Bc6!

An important move: the threat of ... Bf3(e4) forces White to block the long diagonal. 'At the cost of two tempi Black averts the breakthrough c2-c4-c5.' (Karpov)

17 d5

Of course, not 17 Bf1? Qd5. But now the d5-pawn restricts the mobility of White's light-squared bishop, while the black bishop at d6

becomes not only a strong defensive piece, but also in some cases an attacking one!

17 ... Bd7 18 Bf1?!

It would appear that Gata did not imagine how Black would solve the problem of completing his development, and believed that he had sufficient time to prepare an attack. Therefore, not seeing for the moment an active plan, he makes 'good-quality' moves.

According to Karpov, the only way of casting doubts on Black's idea was the sharp 18 Bd3! In the event of 18 ... Qxd5 19 c4 it is hard to Black to safeguard his king: after 19 ... Qa5? there follows 20 c5! Bxc5 21 Bb5 Bd6 22 Qd5 Rb8 23 Bg5+ f6 24 Rxe8+ Bxe8 25 Bd2 Qa3 26 Bb4, winning the queen, while if 19 ... Qe5, then 20 h4 f6 (20 ... Kc8 21 c5) 21 Bxh7 is strong.

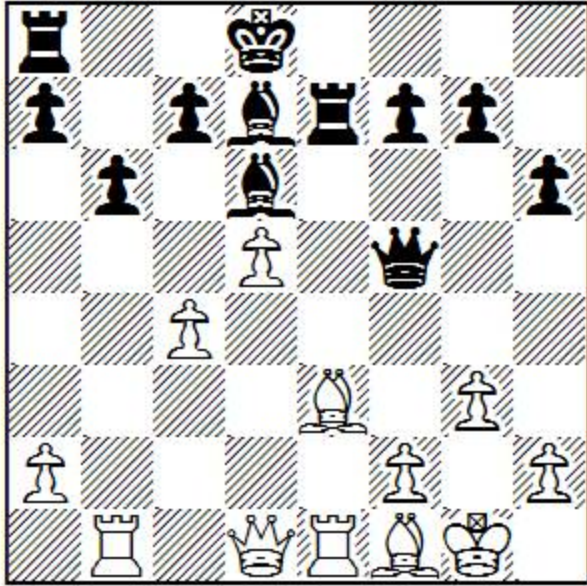
White would have gained an obvious advantage after 18 ... Qf6 19 Qd2 h6 20 Ba6!, for example: 20 ... c5 21 dxc6 Bxc6 22 c4 Kc7 23 c5, or 22 ... Re6 23 Bf4 Rxe1+ 24 Rxe1 Kc7 25 Qxd6+! Qxd6 26 Re7+ Bd7 27 Bb5 Rd8 28 Bxd6+ Kxd6 29 Rxf7 and wins.

His advantage would be less noticeable after 18 ... Qg4! If now 19 Be2 Qg6 20 c4, then Black can force a draw: 20 ... Rxe3 21 fxe3 Bxg3 22 Bd3 Bxh2+ 23 Kxh2 Qh6+. But after 19 Qd2 his problems remain: 19 ... h6 20 c4, or 19 ... a5 20 Bf1 (20 Be2 Qf5 21 Bd4) 20 ... Re7 21 Bd4 with some initiative.

18 ... h6

A far from obvious prelude to a highly effective regrouping. It was also possible to play the immediate 18 ... Re7 19 c4 Ke8 20 Bd3 Qf6 (20 ... Qh3 21 c5! bxc5 22 Qc2 is less good), but all the same the move ... h7-h6 is necessary, so that in certain variations the h7-pawn should not be hanging and the g5-square should be covered, for example: 21 Qd2 Kf8? (21 ... h6!) 22 Bg5 Rxe1+ 23 Rxe1 Qd4 24 Bxh7 Qxc4 25 Re4 Qb5 26 Bf6! with a decisive attack.

19 c4 Re7!



But now Black's plan is obvious: he wants to play ... Ke8-f8 and ... Rae8. Then White's initiative will quickly evaporate, and a slightly inferior endgame will await him. For the moment Kamsky has time to avoid such a development of events. But the question is, does he sense the approach of the critical moment?

20 Bd3

White, to his misfortune, also devises a regrouping, aiming to prevent the black king from hiding on the kingside. It appears to Kamsky that, by creating the queen and bishop battery along the b1-h7 diagonal, he will disclose the defects in Black's position and the king at f8 will not be safe. But this proves to be an illusion!

20 Bg2 (Karpov) was hardly any better – Black would have carried out the same plan: 20 ... Ke8 21 Qd4 Qg6 (21 ... Kf8? 22 Bxh6 Be5 23 Qh4 gxh6? 24 d6!) 22 Qc3 Kf8 23 c5 dxc5 24 Bxc5 Bxc5 25 Qxc5 Qd6, and a draw after 26 Qxd6 cxd6 27 Rxe7 Kxe7 28 Rb7 Kd8 29 Bf1 Rc8 30 Rxa7 Rc5 would have been the quite logical outcome.

20 ... Qf6 21 Kg2?!

Kamsky continues to avoid simplification, not believing that Black's slow plan can go unpunished. 'The impression is that White has mixed up his pieces: instead of placing the bishop on its lawful square g2, he has occupied this square with his king.' (Karpov)

21 Qc2 Ke8 22 c5 bxc5 23 Bxc5 is more active, and in the event of 23 ... Bxc5 24 Qxc5 Qd6 25 Qxd6 cxd6 26 Rxe7+ Kxe7 27 Rb7 (Ftacnik) White has the better endgame, while if 23 ... Kf8 24 Rxe7 Qxe7 25 Bd4 with the idea of Qc3 and Re1 (Christiansen) he has the initiative. However, after 23 ... Rxe1+ 24 Rxe1+ Kf8 the chances gradually become equal.

21 ... Ke8! 22 Bc2 (it is probable that here too 22 Qc2 with the idea of c4-c5 was better – Beliavsky, Mikhalchishin) 22 ... Qc3!

A strong intermediate move. 'My reply cooled Kamsky's ardour.' (Karpov). Of course, the queen cannot be maintained at c3 for long, but for the moment it prevents the plan with Qd3.

23 Bb3?!

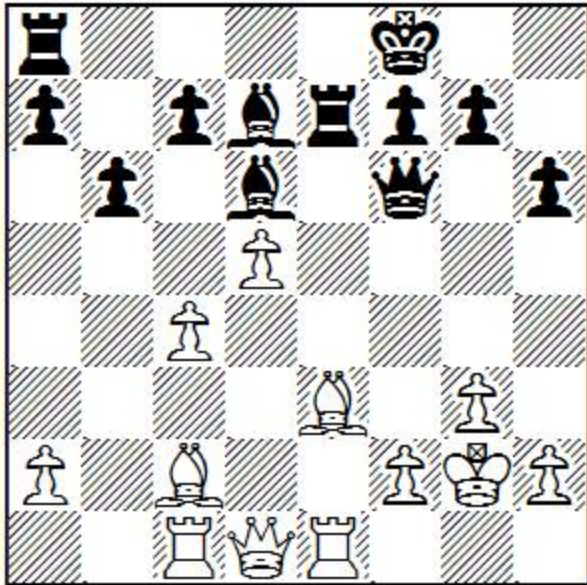
Of course, both 23 Qd3 Qxd3 and 23 Bd4 Rxe1 would most probably have led to a draw. But Kamsky is still thinking of more.

From this point of view 23 Rc1!? was interesting, and if 23 ... Kf8, then 24 Bb1, forcing Black to exercise caution: 24 ... Qf6 25 Qd3 Rae8 26 Bd4 (26 Qh7 g5) 26 ... Be5 27 Qh7 g5 28 Rxe5 Rxe5 29 Rc3 c5! 30 Rf3 Qg7 31 Qxg7+ Kxg7 32 Bxe5+ Rxe5 33 Ra3 Re7! This move enables Black to parry the threats to his queenside. After the amusing 29 Bg6 he can play both 29 ... Qxg6 30 Qh8+ Qg8 31 Qxh6+ Qg7 32 Qxg7+ Kxg7 33 f4 f6 with a drawn endgame, and the no less amusing 29 ... Bh3+ 30 Kxh3 g4+ 31 Kxg4 fxg6 32 Qxh6+ Kg8 33 Kh3 Qf5+ 34 Kg2 Qe4+ 35 Kg1 Qxd4, after which White gives perpetual check.

However, no great danger is evident in the event of 23 ... Qxc4. Only, after 24 Bf5 it is probably not worth taking the second pawn – the situation after 24 ... Qxa2 25 Bxd7+ Kxd7 26 Qd3 Re5 27 Red1 may prove unpleasant for Black. 24 ... Qa4 25 Bxd7+ Qxd7 26 Qd3 f5 is safer, for example: 27 Bd4 Kf8 28 Re6 Rxe6 29 Qxf5+ Qf7 30 Qxf7+ Kxf7 31 dxe6+ Kxe6 32 Bxg7 h5 with a double-edged endgame.

23 ... Kf8 24 Rc1 Qf6 25 Bc2?!

White's stubbornness in conducting an unpromising plan has irreparable consequences. 25 c5 bxc5 26 Bxc5 is more logical, and the attempt by Black to land a blow – 26 ... Bxc5 27 Rxc5 Bg4? meets with a spectacular refutation: 28 Qxg4 Rxe1 29 d6! (the f7-square is on the point of collapse) 29 ... Qg6 30 Qf3 c6 31 Rxc6 Qf6 (31 ... Rd8 32 Rc7 is totally bad) 32 Qxf6 gxf6 33 Rc7 with the better ending for White. But after 26 ... a5! (Karpov) 27 Rxe7 Qxe7 28 Qf3 a4 29 Bc4 Re8! the position is equal.



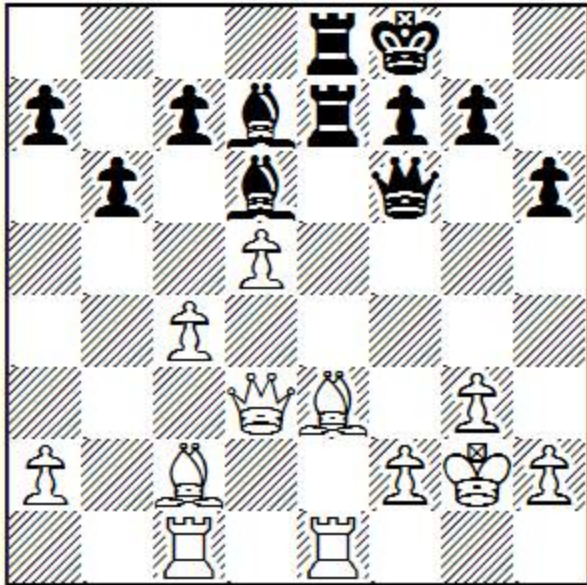
25 ... Rae8

Karpov has successfully completed his planned regrouping, dumbfounding the game commentator grandmaster Daniel King: 'How Karpov does it, I don't know. He has an uncanny ability to coordinate his forces so that they are at their most efficient. Notice how he has arranged his pieces so that they do not stand in each other's way, and they are all protected; there appears not to be a single weakness in his whole army. Compare this position with the one where he played 11 ... Kd8; it is hard to imagine that he would be able to achieve such harmony. With his king safe, his rooks doubled and White's kingside weakened, the initiative has passed over to Karpov.'

Indeed, Black's position is now preferable. And for White in such cases, after the great efforts spent searching for attacking continuations, it can be very difficult to readjust and defend. Through inertia he makes active moves, which often lead to disaster ...

26 Qd3?

Gata is still dreaming of the threats that his queen and bishop battery will create ... Here, for the last time, he could have rejected his planned set-up and urgently exchanged bishops – 26 Ba4 Bxa4 27 Qxa4, completely handing the initiative to his opponent (27 ... Qg6 28 Qc2 Re4 29 Bd2 Bc5), but retaining real chances of a draw.



26 ... Bg4!

This must have come as an ice-cold shower for Kamsky! White has spent a great deal of time creating the threat of the queen's invasion at h7, but it turns out that after 27 Qh7 g5! it is not he, but Black who begins a decisive attack on the king: 28 Rb1 (28 Kg1 Bb4! 29 Rf1 Be2) 28 ... Bxg3! 29 hxg3 Rxe3! 30 Rxe3 Rxe3 31 fxe3 Qf3+ 32 Kg1 Qxe3+ 33 Kg2 Bf3+ 34 Kh3 g4+ 35 Kh4 Qg5 mate. With one move Karpov overturned the evaluation of the situation!

27 Bd2??

'A real disaster' (Karpov). White's position is, of course, difficult, but it is still defensible. 27 f4 (but not 27 Bd4? Qf3+!) would have set definite problems – in Karpov's variation 27 ... Bc5 28 Bxc5 bxc5 29 Rxe7 Rxe7 30 Bd1 Black's chances of success are sharply reduced. However, he wins with the unexpected 27 ... Rxe3!! 28 Rxe3 Rxe3 29 Qxe3 Qb2!, for example: 30 h3 Bf5 31 Qd2 Be4+ 32 Kf1 a5! 33 a4 f5 34 g4 Ba3 35 gxf5 Bxf5 36 Ke2 Bb4 37 Qd1 g6.

The most tenacious defence was 27 Bd1! Bf5 28 Qb3! (not 28 Qd2 Ba3 Karpov), although after 28 ... Be4+ 29 Kg1 Kg8 30 Bc2 h5 the black army looks very threatening.

27 ... Re2! (the decisive invasion) 28 Rxe2 Rxe2 29 Rf1 (29 Be1 Bc5! Karpov) 29 ... Rxd2! 0-1

In view of 30 Qxd2 Qf3+ 31 Kg1 Bh3.

An incredible finish! After such wanderings by the black king, it was hard to imagine that it would all end in a lighting and irresistible attack on ... the white king. 'It would appear that Kamsky did not in fact fully realise what had happened on the board.' (Karpov)

Then the champion also won the 7th game, which lasted nearly seven hours and 71 moves, and after a draw in the 8th he also won the 9th! The score became crushing: $6\frac{1}{2}$ - $2\frac{1}{2}$. But here, to his honour, Gata managed to display his fighting qualities, and in the second half of the match there was an equal and fierce struggle. Karpov gained his sixth win in the 14th game (as though paying tribute to the memory of unlimited matches), and after the 18th he gathered the necessary $10\frac{1}{2}$ points.

It need hardly be said how great a disappointment this was for the Kamskys – Gata and his strict father Rustem, who had devoted all their efforts to the achievement of the supreme goal. Soon, on the insistence of his father, this talented grandmaster gave up playing chess for a long time and began seriously studying medicine ...

Meanwhile, on 23rd August 1996, at a four-way meeting between myself, Karpov, the FIDE President Kirsan Ilyumzhinov and the President of the Russian Chess Federation Andrey Makarov, it was decided that in 1997 a Kasparov-Karpov match 'for the absolute championship' would be held, and a few days later we put our signatures to a corresponding memorandum.

I will not delve into the question of why our sixth match did not in fact take place (I will express my viewpoint in my autobiography), but a far from minor role in this was played by the result of a double-round super-tournament of the six strongest players in the world in Las Palmas (December 1996): 1. Kasparov – $6\frac{1}{2}$ out of 10; 2. Anand – $5\frac{1}{2}$; 3-4. Topalov and Kramnik – 5; 5-6. Ivanchuk and Karpov – 4.

In this category 21 tournament, a record for that time and comparable perhaps with the epochal AVRO tournament (1938), Anatoly Evgenyevich, after losing in the second half to Anand and me, was the only contestant who did not score a single win. Of course, he could and should have played better, if he had shown his full commitment to the tournament and had he not gone off at the height of the struggle to the opening of some junior championship in Paris. Here one can't help remembering Capablanca, who during the Moscow international tournament (1925) also travelled to another city –

Leningrad, to give a simultaneous display, and suffered a defeat after his return.

After this, all that was left for Karpov was to defend his title of FIDE champion. Precisely at that time, on the instigation of Ilyumzhinov, under the pretext of making it livelier and more of a spectacle, the title of world champion began to be contested in knock-out tournaments, with 128 participants playing mini-matches of two games (at the later stages – four and six). In the event of the scores being equal, matters were decided by a tie-break: rapidplay chess, and if necessary even blitz.

Of course, I was not against the system itself, on which the famous first international tournament was held (London 1851), but I – and not only I! – thought that it was good only for a World Cup type of event, and absolutely unsuitable for determining the strongest player on the planet. Therefore, when Karpov and I ('in the aims of overall conciliation') were invited to join in at the semi-final stage (a serious privilege!) I declined to play as a matter of principle, not wishing to create a precedent which would cause damage to the historic title of world champion.

But then FIDE allowed Karpov directly into the super-final(!), despite the protests of many well-known grandmasters – Kramnik even refused to participate ... A 'minor' detail: the participants in the super-final received the lion's share of the overall five million prize fund: \$1.37 million went to the winner, and \$768,000 to the loser.

The main stage of the first FIDE world championship held on the knock-out system took place from 9-30 December 1997 in Groningen and brought a deserved triumph to Vishy Anand. On the way to his goal he defeated Nikolic (2-0), Khalifman (1-1; rapidplay: 2½-1½), Almasi (2-0), Shirov (1½-½), Gelfand (1½-½) and Adams (2-2; rapidplay: 2-2; blitz: 1-0). And already in Lausanne on 1st January 1998 – just imagine! – the opening took place of his super-final match with Karpov, who had flown in to there from the Canary Islands ...

It has to be said that Karpov spoke very respectfully about the play of the Indian grandmaster: 'His genius lies in his originality. Anand stands out among the many whom I have played against, and sticks in the memory. Here there is something special, Eastern, unfamiliar to us. We probably have a different view not only of life, but also the chessboard ...' The fact that Vishy also has a different view of life was also clear from his interview after Groningen, in which he stated: 'I think

that we should enter the 21st century, forgetting about privileges, and play normal world championships.'

So, the chess world witnessed FIDE's unprecedented 'Lausanne experiment' – a match of six games between the freshly relaxed 46-year-old Karpov and the 28-year-old Anand, exhausted by three weeks of struggle.

Game 105

A.Karpov-V.Anand

FIDE World Championship Match, Lausanne 1998, 1st game

Semi-Slav Defence D48

1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 e3 e6 5 Nf3 Nbd7 6 Bd3

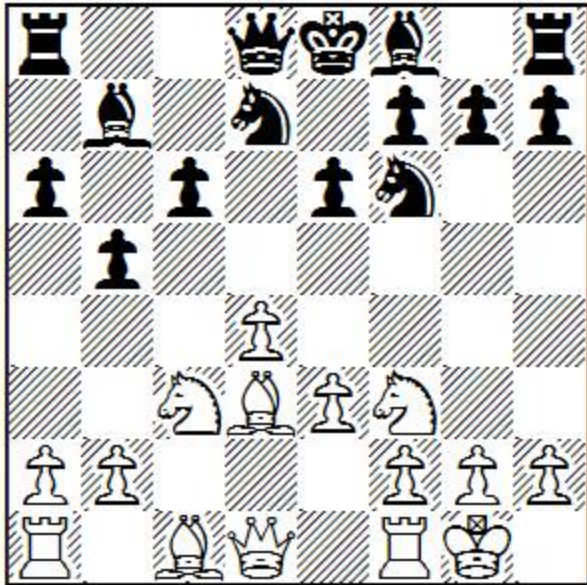
In their Candidates match (1991), in Biel (1997) and in the 5th game of the match in Lausanne, Karpov played 6 Qc2 against Anand (*Game Nos.95 and 96*), but on the whole Black was able to solve his opening problems.

6 ... dxc4 7 Bxc4 b5 8 Bd3 Bb7

This move of Larsen occurred most frequently in the 'Meran' encounters between these two opponents. Vishy also played 8 ... b4 several times, and it was only at the last attempt (Monaco rapidplay 1996) that Karpov gained a tangible advantage after the energetic 9 Ne4 Be7 10 0-0 Bb7 11 Nxf6+ Nxf6 12 a3 0-0 13 axb4 Bxb4 14 e4 h6 15 e5! Nd7 16 Bc2 Re8 17 Qd3 Nf8 18 Qe4 Ng6 19 Rd1 Qe7 20 Qg4!

9 0-0 (9 a3 – cf. *Game No.103*, note to Black's 8th move; 9 e4 – *Volume 4, Game Nos.43-47*) 9 ... a6

Now play transposes into the variation with 8 ... a6. Anand has also employed 9 ... b4 (like Polugayevsky – *Game No.26*) or even 9 ... Be7.



10 e4 c5 11 d5 Qc7 12 dxe6 fxe6 13 Bc2

The premature 13 Ng5 is parried by 13 ... Qc6! 14 Qe2 c4 15 Bc2 Bc5 16 Be3 0-0 17 Rad1 h6 18 Nf3 Qc7 19 Nd4 Rae8 20 a3 Ne5 with an excellent game for Black (Karpov-Anand, Monaco rapidplay 1994).

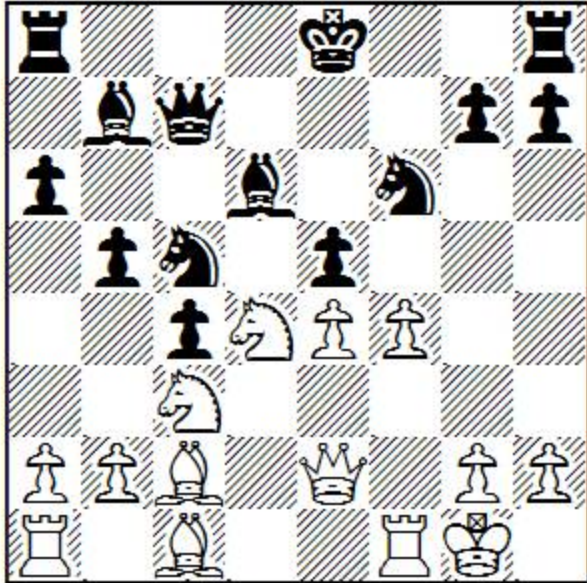
13 ... c4

The following double-edged continuation has also been tried: 13 ... Be7 14 Ng5 Qc6 15 Qf3 h6 16 Qh3 hxg5!? 17 Qxh8+ Kf7 18 Qh3 g4 19 Qh4 Ne5 (Karpov-Kramnik, Monaco rapidplay 1994), as well as, in the second half of the 1990s, Dreev's moves 13 ... 0-0-0 or 13 ... Bd6!?

14 Qe2

By that time 14 Ng5 (*Game No.103*) had already been neutralised, and a new trend had developed – 14 Nd4 Nc5 15 Be3!, sacrificing the e4-pawn: 15 ... 0-0-0 16 Qe2 e5 17 Nf3 (Lautier-Gelfand, Amsterdam 1996), or 15 ... e5 16 Nf5 (Lautier-Kramnik, Monaco rapidplay 1996). 16 Nf3! is stronger, and if 16 ... Ncxe4, then 17 Nxe4 Nxe4 18 Re1 with the initiative (Gelfand-Bareev, Novgorod 1997). Black does better to complete his development, even at the cost of the exchange: 16 ... Be7! 17 Ng5 0-0! 18 Bxc5 Bxc5 19 Ne6 Qb6 20 Nxf8 Rxf8 (Kasimdzhanov-Kasparov, Linares 2005).

14 ... Bd6 15 Nd4 Nc5 16 f4 e5



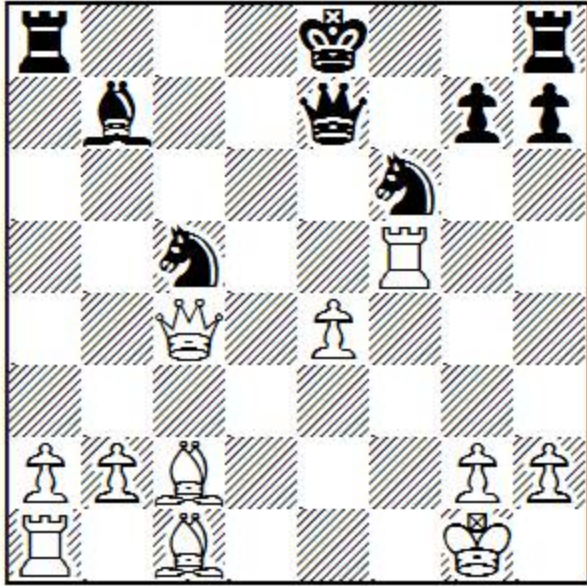
17 Ndx b5!?

‘An unpleasant surprise.’ (Karpov). In a game with Akopian (Erevan Olympiad 1996) I spent a long time considering this sacrifice on b5 and nevertheless played 17 Nf5, but after 17 ... 0-0 18 Nxd6 Qxd6 19 fxe5 Qxe5 20 Rf5 Qc7 21 Bg5 with the accurate 21 ... Nfxe4! 22 Rxf8+ Rxf8 23 Nxe4 Qe5 Black forced a draw: 24 Nf6+ gxf6 25 Bxh7+ Kxh7 26 Qh5+.

After home preparation it was easier for Karpov to decide on the knight sacrifice, especially since his opponent, tired out after the battles in Groningen, might well have been unable to find his way in the resulting complications.

17 ... axb5 18 Nxb5 Qb6 19 Nxd6+ Qxd6 20 fxe5 Qxe5 21 Rf5 Qe7 22 Qxc4

Now Black faces an important choice.



22 ... Rc8

'A skilful defence – play in the centre!' (M.Gurevich). It was this move that almost completely put the variation with 17 Ndxb5 out of use. It is dangerous to play 22 ... Ncxe4?! 23 Qb5+! (depriving the opponent of the right to castle) 23 ... Kf8 24 Be3 with a strong attack. 22 ... Ncd7 leads to an unclear game (according to Anand, 'Kramnik said that he had checked all this way back in 1991 with some friends') after 23 Bd2 Rc8 24 Qb3.

23 Qb5+! Ncd7!

'Impeccable tactical fencing by both sides.' (Zaitsev)

24 Qxb7 (but not 24 Ba4?! Bc6 25 Qa6 0-0! 26 Bxc6 Nb8 Karpov) **24 ... Rxc2 25 Bg5**

If 25 Ra5!? (Karpov) Black has the good reply 25 ... Kf7! (Stohl), since after 26 Qb3+ Qe6! 27 Qxc2 with 27 ... Qb6+ he also picks up a rook.

25 ... Qd6!

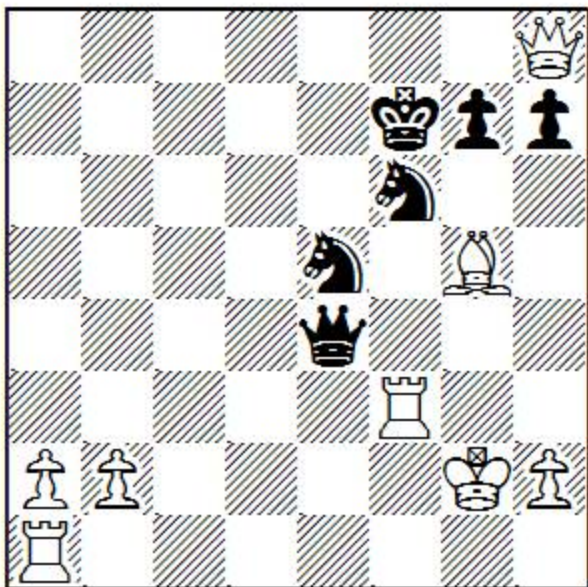
25 ... Qxe4? is not possible on account of 26 Qxe4 Nxe4 27 Re1 Rc4 28 b3! (not 28 Rd5? 0-0!) 28 ... Rd4 29 Rf2! (a very strong manoeuvre) 29 ... h6 30 Rd2! (Karpov) 30 ... Rb4 31 a3 and wins, while after 29 ... Ndf6 30 Rf4 (Stohl) 30 ... Rd1 (there is nothing better) 31 Rxd1 Nxe5 32 a4 Black again most probably loses.

26 Qa8+ Kf7?

Fatigue nevertheless told: Anand decided to force a pretty draw by perpetual check, but he missed White's 31st move. 26 ... Qb8 suggests itself: 27 Qxb8+ Nxb8 28 Bxf6 (28 a4 0-0! Zaitsev) 28 ... gxf6 29 Rf2 (Karpov) 29 ... Rxf2 30 Kxf2 Nc6 (Stohl), or 29 Rxf6 Rxb2 30 a4 Nd7 31 Rf2 Rb4 32 a5 Rxe4 33 a6 Ke7 34 a7 Ra8 (Flear-Galkin, Port Erin 2001) with a drawn endgame.

27 Qxh8 Qd4+ 28 Kh1 Qxe4 (28 ... Qxb2 29 Rd1! M.Gurevich) 29 Rf3 Rxc2!? (the point of Black's idea; 29 ... Ne5? 30 Rxf6+) 30 Kxc2 Ne5

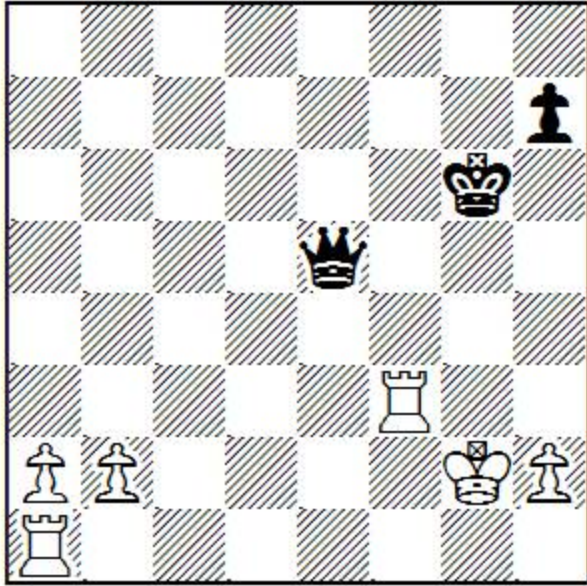
And here instead of 31 Rf1, which is what Anand was expecting and which after 31 ... Nxf3 32 Rxf3 Qe2+ would have led to a draw, there follows ... a queen sacrifice, after which the white bishop succeeds in eliminating both knights!



31 Qxg7+!

'Usually a queen attacks a king from the centre of the board, but here this insidious blow is struck from the very corner.' (Karpov)

31 ... Kxg7 32 Bxf6+ Kg6 (32 ... Kh6 does not change anything in view of 33 Bxe5 Qxe5 34 Rf2) 33 Bxe5 Qxe5

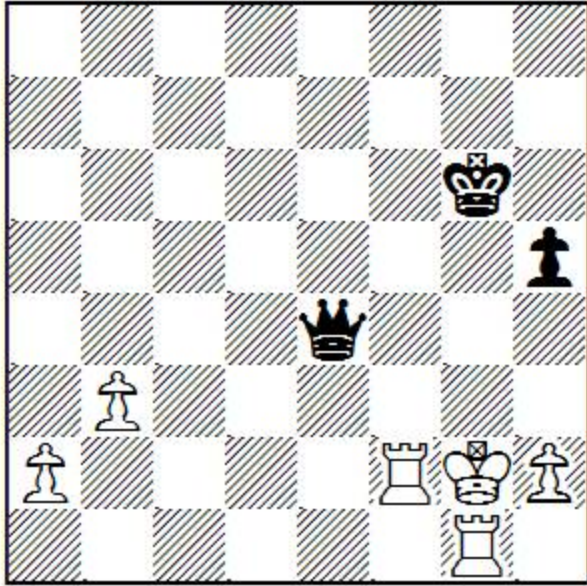


34 Rg1 (a pretty ambush, but 34 Rf2 is also sufficient – Stohl) **34 ... h5**
There is nothing else: **34 ... Qxb2+?** **35 Kh1+!** **Kh5** **36 Rh3** mate.

35 b3! **Qe2+** **36 Rf2**

There was a quicker win by **36 Kh3+** **Kh7** **37 Rf7+** **Kh6** **38 Rf6+** **Kh7** **39 a4** (Karpov) or **37 ... Kh8** **38 Rf6!** **Qd3+** **39 Rg3** **Qd7+** **40 Kh4** **Qd4+** **41 Kg5** etc.

36 ... Qe4+



37 Kf1+?!

And this is already an error. Now the a2-pawn is lost and the battle is greatly prolonged. After 37 Kh3+! Kh7 38 Rf7+ Kh6 (38 ... Kh8 39 Rf6! – cf. above) 39 Rf6+ Kh7 40 Rg3 both queenside pawns would have been ready to advance.

37 ... Kh6 38 Rg3 Qb1+ 39 Kg2 Qe4+ 40 Rgf3 Qg6+ 41 Kf1 Qb1+ 42 Kg2 Qg6+ 43 Kh1 Qb1+ 44 Rf1 Qxa2

To avoid the checks, White has had to give up a pawn, but subsequently Karpov plays accurately: the harmonious work of the rooks helps the white king to escape from the checks and the b-pawn to advance to the queening square.

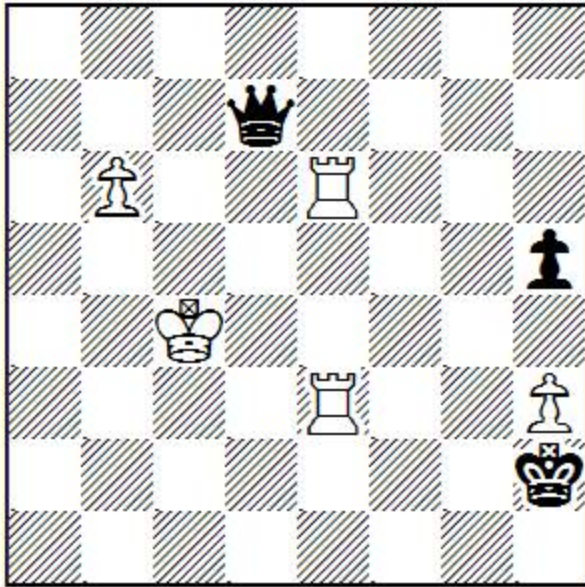
45 Rf6+ Kg7 46 Rf7+ Kh8 47 Rf8+ Kg7 48 R8f7+ Kg8 49 R7f3 Kg7 50 h3 Qc2 51 R1f2 Qe4 52 Kg2 Qb4 53 Re2 Qd4 54 Re7+ Kg6 55 Re6+ Kg7 56 Rg3+ Kf7 57 Rge3 Qd5+ 58 Kg3 Qg5+ 59 Kf2 Qh4+ 60 Ke2 Qd4 61 R6e4 Qa1?!

‘An instantaneous, impulsive move’ (M.Gurevich). All the commentators rightly considered 61 ... Qb2+ to be more tenacious, but after 62 Kf3 Qh2 63 h4 (Karpov, Zaitsev) White has a won position all the same.

62 Kd3 Kf6 63 Re6+ Kf5 64 b4 Qc1 65 Kd4 Qc8 66 b5 Qd8+ 67 Kc5 Qc7+ 68 Kb4 Qf4+ 69 Kb3 Qc7 70 b6

‘With the pawn on b6, the win is merely a question of time.’ (M.Gurevich)

70 ... Qd7 71 R3e5+ Kf4 72 Re4+ Kg3 73 Re3+ Kh2 74 Kc4



The white pieces have achieved complete coordination, and now it is the turn of the king to help the b6-pawn to advance.

74 ... h4

Anand makes things easier for White, by giving up his pawn. After this, exploiting the fact that the queen is tied to the b6-pawn, Karpov calmly changes course with his king, sending it to the right flank to pick up the booty.

75 Kc5! Qc8+ 76 Kd5 Qd8+ 77 Ke4 Qd7 78 Kf5 Kg2 79 Kg5 Qg7+ 80 Kxh4 Kf2 (80 ... Qh7+ 81 Kg5 Qg7+ 82 Rg6) 81 R3e5 Qh8+

81 ... Qg3+ 82 Kh5 Qxh3+ 83 Kg6 Qg2+ 84 Rg5 Qb7 85 Rf5+ (Stohl) 85 ... Kg3 86 Rf7 etc. was also hopeless.

82 Kg4 Qg7+ 83 Kf5 Qh7+ 84 Kf6 Qh4+ (84 ... Qxh3? 85 Re2+ would have led to the loss of the queen) 85 Kf7 Qh7+ 86 Ke8 Qb7 87 h4 Qb8+ 88 Kf7 Qb7+ 89 Kg6 Qb8 90 h5 Qg8+ 91 Kf5 Qh7+ 92 Kf6 Kf3 93 Re3+ Kf2 94 Re2+ Kf3 95 R2e3+ Kf2 96 Kg5 Qg8+ 97 Kh4 Qd8+ 98 Kh3 Qd1 99 Re2+ Kf3 100 Kh2

‘Both players were extremely tired. Thus I missed the possibility of 100 Re1! with unavoidable mate.’ (Karpov)

100 ... Qd8 101 R6e3+ Kf4 102 b7 Qb6 103 Re4+ Kf3 104 R2e3+ Kf2 105 Re7 Qd6+ 106 Kh3 Qb8 107 R3e5 Kg1 108 Rg7+ 1-0

In view of 108 ... Kf2 109 Rf7+ Kg1 110 Re1 mate.

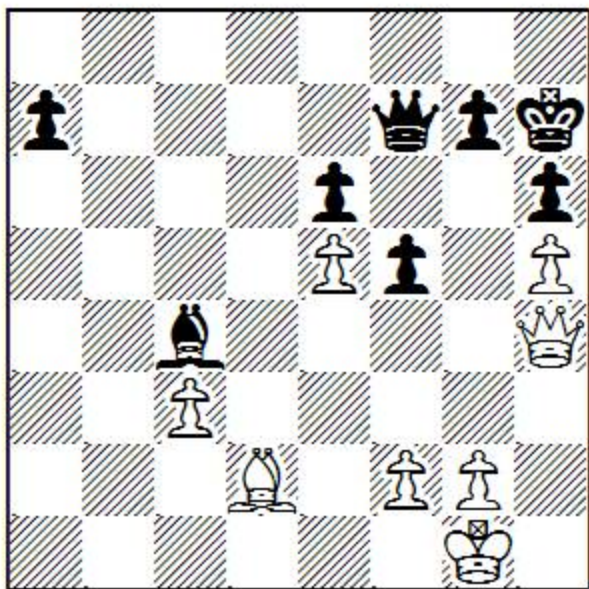
‘An extremely vexing defeat for Vishy – and a very painful blow in such a short match.’ (M.Gurevich). We must acknowledge Anand’s courage and class: in the 2nd game he levelled the scores, in the 3rd he gained a draw in the ‘Meran’, and he was undoubtedly hoping to build on his success in the 4th.

But that day something went wrong for him in the opening. After failing to gain an advantage, Vishy handled the middlegame uncertainly and ended up in a rather unpleasant situation, demanding of White a painstaking defence. Whereas Karpov, who was in his element, sought the slightest chances of playing for a win. After the rooks were exchanged on the 32nd move, an endgame was reached with queens and opposite-coloured bishops, where White’s defence was complicated by the weakness of his h5-pawn and the presence of the opponent’s outside passed pawn on the a-file.

Game 106

V.Anand-A.Karpov

FIDE World Championship Match, Lausanne 1998, 4th game



33 ... Bb5! 34 c4 (34 Qb4?! Qxh5!) 34 ... Be8 35 c5?

With this natural move Anand misses a real chance of a draw: after 35 Qd8! Qxh5 36 Be3 it is not apparent how Black can win. At the

board Karpov considered here 36 ... Bc6 37 Qd6 Ba8 38 Qd8 Be4 39 f3 with equality.

Later Zaitsev recommended 36 ... Qg6, in order after 37 Qd6 f4! 38 Bxf4 Qb1+! 39 Kh2 Qe4 to win a pawn, although it is possible that White can still save the queen endgame after 40 Be3 (40 Qd2?! Bc6! 41 f3 Qxc4) 40 ... Bc6 41 f3 Qxe3 42 Qxc6 Qxe5+ ('etc.' Zaitsev). But he has a stronger reply – 37 Qa8! (control of the long diagonal) 37 ... a5 38 c5 a4 39 c6 f4 40 c7! (Ftacnik) with a draw.

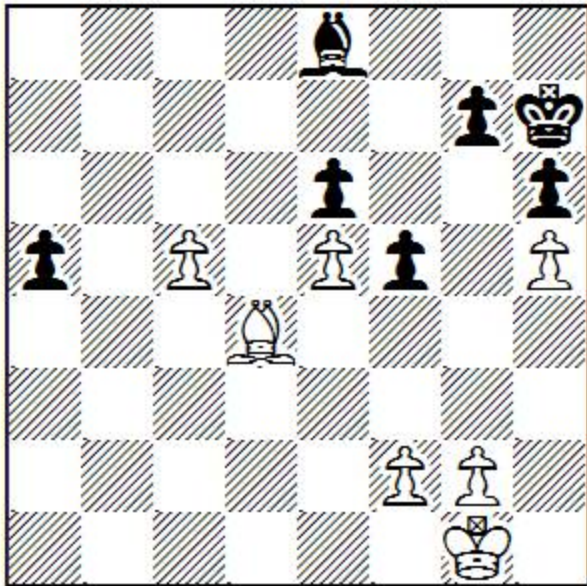
35 ... Qd7!

'An excellent manoeuvre.' (Zaitsev). 'The h5-pawn will not run away, and first Black can activate his queen.' (M.Gurevich)

36 Bc3 Qd3 37 Qd4

To avoid the worst (37 Bd4?! a5 or 37 Bb4?! Qd5) White exchanges queens, transposing into a bishop endgame a pawn down, since the h5-pawn is doomed.

37 ... Qxd4 38 Bxd4 a5



39 c6?

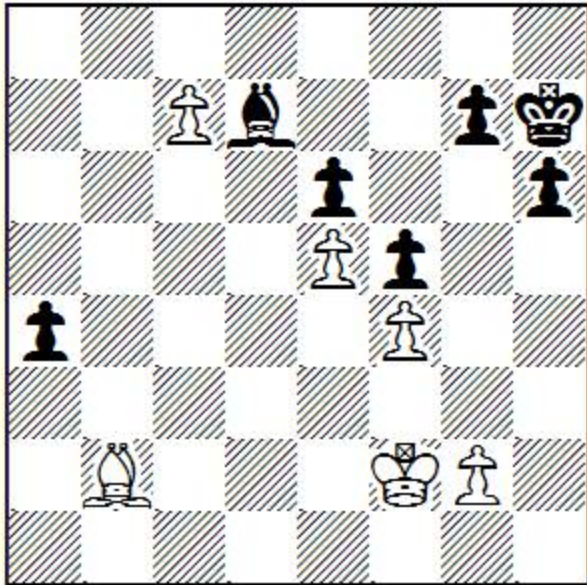
'It would appear that Anand was already reconciled to defeat.' (Karpov). 'A suicidal move, made instantly!! "The position was lost in any case," said Anand at a press conference. Even if this is so (and to me, for example, it is not obvious), 39 c6? is the quickest way to lose.' (M.Gurevich)

Indeed, this move deserves a question mark, for the reason that it makes things easier for Black. It would appear that Vishy was right: this highly interesting ending with opposite-coloured bishops was already lost for White! We will consider two ways of defending – with the pawn on f3 and with the pawn on f4:

1) 39 f3 Bxh5 (39 ... f4!?) 40 c6 Be8 41 c7 Bd7 42 Kf2 a4 43 Bc5 f4 (Ftacnik). Then Black plays ... g7-g5, ... Kg6-f5, ... h6-h5, moves his bishop to b7 and follows up with ... h5-h4 and ... Kg6-f7-e8-d7 or ... g5-g4, in order after f3xg4 and ... h5xg4 followed by g2-g3xf4 and ... Kxf4 to obtain a position of the same type that arises in variation 2: Black places his pawn on g3 and breaks through unhindered with his king on the queenside.

According to Karpov, the defensive line with 42 g3 a4 43 Bb2 is more tenacious, but in my view this does not seriously complicate Black's task: 43 ... g5 44 Kf2 Kg6 45 Ke3 Bc8 46 Ba3 Bb7 47 Bd6 Kf7 48 Ba3 Ke8 49 f4 Kd7 50 Bd6 Kc6 51 Kd4 gxf4 52 gxf4 h5 53 Ke3 Kd5 or 49 Bb4 Kd7 50 Bd6 Kc6 51 Kd4 (if 51 f4, then 51 ... Kd5 52 f4xg5 hxg5 53 Kd3 Ba6+! 54 Ke3 Kc4) 51 ... h5! 52 Be7 (after 52 f4 gxf4 53 gxf4 h4 54 Ke3 Kd5 the win is simple) 52 ... Kxc7 53 Bxg5 Bxf3 with two extra pawns and the imminent creation of a second passed pawn.

2) 39 f4 a4 40 Bb2 Bxh5 41 c6 Be8 42 c7 Bd7 43 Kf2, and Black faces a difficult choice.



Analysis diagram

The hasty 43 ... g5? throws away the win: 44 Kg3 Kg6 45 Bc1! Kh5 46 Ba3 Bc8 47 Bc1 Bb7 48 Ba3 Kg6 49 Bc1. The pawn tension created is advantageous to White. If 49 ... g4 he acquires the move 50 Kh4 with a threat to the h6-pawn. And after 49 ... Kf7, to take the king to the queenside, White captures the pawn (50 fxc5 hxc5 51 Bxc5), returns with his bishop (51 ... a3 52 Bc1 a2 53 Bb2), and then has time to exchange his weak g-pawn (53 ... Ke7 54 Kf4 Kd7 55 g4 fxc4 56 Kxc4 Kxc7) and return with his king (57 Kf4 Kb6 58 Ke3 Kc5 59 Kd2). 49 ... Ba6 50 Kf3 gxf4 51 Kxf4 Kf7 52 g4 fxc4 53 Kxc4 Ke7 is more cunning. Now 54 Kh5? loses: 54 ... Kd7 55 Kxh6 Kxc7 56 Kg5 Kc6 57 Kf4 Kd5 58 Bb2 Kc4 59 Ke3 Kb3 60 Bd4 Kc2! 61 Bc5 Bb5 – zugzwang. 54 Ba3+ Kd7 55 Bd6 Be2+ 56 Kh4 Kc8 57 Kg3 is correct, when Black cannot break through with his king. The bishop at d6 is ideally placed: it defends the c7-pawn and controls the a4-pawn.

43 ... Kg6! leads to a decisive strengthening of the position: 44 Ba3 Bc8 45 Ke3, and now not 45 ... Kf7 46 Kd4 (Ftacnik) 46 ... Ke8 47 Kc5 Kd7 48 Kb5! (not 48 Kb6? on account of 48 ... g5 49 fxc5 hxc5 50 Bb2 f4 51 Bc1 Ke7 – Black gives up his bishop for the c-pawn, but creates a second passed pawn on the kingside) 48 ... Kxc7 49 Kxa4 with a draw, but 45 ... Kh5! (45 ... Bb7, preventing Kf3, will perhaps also do) 46 Kf3 Kh4 47 Be7+ g5 48 fxc5 hxc5 49 g3+ Kh5 50 Ba3 Bb7+ 51 Kf2 Kg4

52 Bc1 Ba6 53 Kg2 Bc8 54 Kf2 Bb7 (zugzwang forces White to move his bishop from c1) 55 Ba3 f4 56 gxf4 Kxf4! 57 Bc1+ Kg4 58 Kg1 Kh4, and the black pawn goes to g3, and the king – with decisive effect – to the queenside.

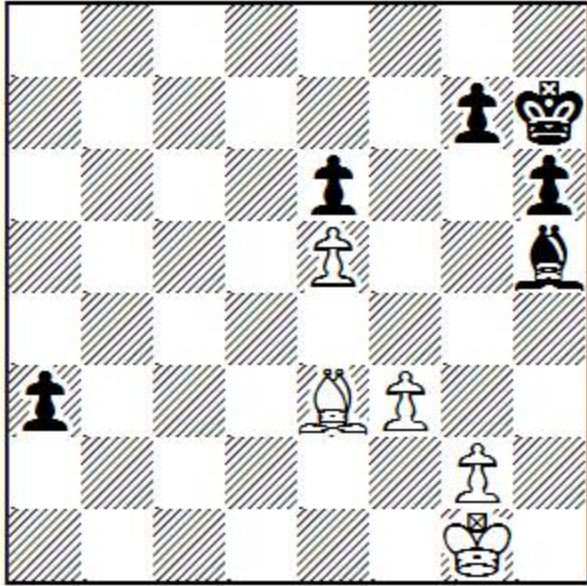
Nothing would have been changed by 39 Bc3 a4 40 Bb4 Bxh5! 41 c6 Be2! 42 c7 Ba6 (Karpov, Zaitsev). After f2-f3 or f2-f4 Black carries out one of the plans examined above. Thus it can be said with a large degree of certainty that Anand missed a draw earlier, although, if White had retained his c-pawn, the win for Black would have been more difficult. Anand was hoping to ease his defence by retaining an equal number of pawns on the kingside.

39 ... Bxc6 40 f3 f4!

Vishy underestimated this study-like possibility. ‘The key move, which Karpov undoubtedly foresaw in advance.’ (Zaitsev). After 40 ... Be8 41 g4 the game would probably have ended in a draw. Now, however, Black picks up the h5-pawn and White, while dealing with the f4-pawn, is forced to allow the enemy passed pawn to reach a2.

41 Bb2 Be8 42 Bc1 a4 43 Bxf4 a3 44 Be3 Bxh5

White’s downfall is caused by the weakness of his kingside pawns. If he places them on light squares, then the threat of their elimination by the bishop means that the white king will be unable to head to the queenside, when the black king breaks through there. But placing them on dark squares creates irreparable light-squared weaknesses, which the black king can exploit to set up a second passed pawn.



45 Kf2

Or 45 g4 a2 46 Bd4 Be8 47 f4 g6 (Black sets about creating a passed pawn) 48 Kf2 h5 49 Kg3 Ba4 50 Kh4 Kh6 51 Bc3 Bd1 52 gxh5 gxh5 (Ftacnik) – now the white king will be tied to the h-pawn, while Black's heads to the queenside.

45 ... Be8 46 Bd4 Bc6 47 Bc3 a2

'Black has a clear-cut winning plan: ... Kg6-f5, ... g7-g5, ... h6-h5-h4 and ... g5-g4! Realising this, Vishy provokes a crisis.' (M.Gurevich)

48 g3 h5! 49 g4

'This hastens the end.' (Karpov). But 49 Kg2 g5 50 Kf2 Kg6 51 Ke3 h4 52 Kf2 h3 is equally hopeless, while if 49 f4, then 49 ... Kg6 50 Ke3 Kf5 51 Bb2 Kg4 52 Kf2 h4 53 gxh4 Kxf4! (Ftacnik), and the h-pawn is lost.

49 ... h4! 0-1

After 50 f4 g5! 51 f5 (51 fxg5 Kg6) 51 ... exf5 52 gxf5 g4 the black pawns are irresistible.

'Anand must have been shocked by the events of this game: something out of the ordinary happened, the sort of occurrence that is etched for a long time in the memory of chess generations.' (Zaitsev). Incidentally, a couple of decades earlier Karpov had already won a similar ending with opposite-coloured bishops against Kurajica (*Game No.69*). These two endings are an excellent illustration of how the 12th

world champion succeeded with maximum effect in exploiting imperceptible errors, committed by his opponents under the weight of mounting problems.

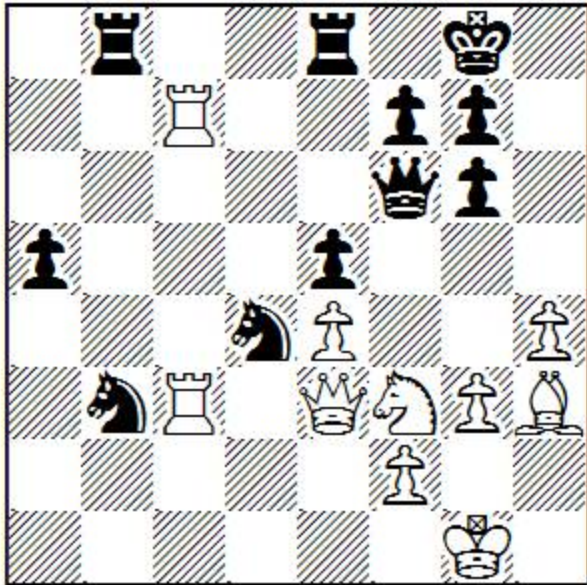
‘Karpov’s first win against Anand with Black!’ wrote grandmaster Mikhail Gurevich after the 4th game. ‘The loss has put Vishy in an extremely difficult match situation. As for the quality of his play in this game, it can be explained only by extreme tiredness. Human powers are not unlimited: behind him he already had a month of continuous play ...’

Nevertheless, Anand gained a draw in the 5th game without particular problems, and then he won the 6th, truly the ‘game of his life’: 3-3! ‘Of course, I did not expect that I would manage to win,’ he said immediately after the game, ‘and now I am very, very happy. I am so pleased that I have managed to level the scores, that for the moment I am not thinking about tomorrow’s tie-break. I will think about it later.’

A dramatic moment! Makarichev: ‘Vishy probably experienced a feeling of mental bankruptcy – the bankruptcy of a victor, when after very hard labours his joy mingles with numbness and apathy. But he still had to play the tie-break!’ Campomanes: ‘The same thing happened with Karpov as in 1987 in Seville: he again was unable to make a draw in the last, decisive game of the match. But in Seville there was no tie-break, but here there is one – and it is practically impossible to predict the winner.’

Karpov: ‘I was very upset: I lost a position in which there were no longer any dangers for Black. I didn’t calculate a variation. Well, and for a match that was going so well to come to such a state – that, of course, was a shock, and we hardly slept all night. Although we took a decision: no chess, no analysis of either the past, or the future – simply have a clear head. The only thing that helped was a cold shower before the game.’

The following day the fate of the match and of the FIDE crown was decided in a mini-match of two rapidplay games. It appeared that this was Anand’s forte, but at some point fatigue was bound finally to let him down. In the 1st game with Black he obtained a completely winning position, and also a big advantage in time, but ... he began to ‘drift’! Just before the end, the leader suddenly staggered and fell in the last few metres of the marathon.



39 ... Nxf3+?

Black could have won by 39 ... a4! (Yusupov) 40 Bd7 (40 Ng5 a3) 40 ... Nxf3+ 41 Qxf3 Qxf3 42 Rxf3 Re7 43 Bxa4 (there is nothing else: 43 Rc8+ Rxc8 44 Bxc8 Ra7) 43 ... Rxc7 44 Bxb3 Kf8 etc.

40 Qxf3 a4? (40 ... Nd4! would still have retained a healthy extra pawn) 41 Qxf6 gxf6 42 Bd7 Nd4? (42 ... Re7 with equality) 43 Bxe8 Ne2+ 44 Kg2 Nxc3 45 Bxf7+ Kf8 46 Bxg6, and Black was unable to restrain the onslaught of the white pawns (1-0).

Karpov: 'At the start of the 1st game of the tie-break I felt somehow sluggish, but then I livened up and my clarity and rapidity of thought returned ... I think that Anand was simply not prepared for a fierce battle: he thought that he played better at rapidplay chess and that things were already settled. He gave every appearance of thinking that the champion's title was already his. But at the finish I composed myself better.' However, judging by the 1st game, this was not the case: it was not Karpov who 'composed himself' and won, but Anand who switched off and lost.

Zaitsev: 'The break between the games – 15 minutes – was used by Karpov's physical trainer Valery Krylov to massage his protégé, whereas Elizbar Ubilava tried in vain to calm his down ("Vishy could no longer hear and see me: he wasn't there ... "). Alas, in the 2nd game Anand did not demonstrate the necessary strength of mind, lost control

over himself and the position, at a furious tempo gave up two pawns for no reason at all, and the first world championship match under the new system concluded.'

Thus Karpov retained his title of 'king of FIDE', provoking, however, a mixed reaction in the chess world. Dvoretsky: 'The odds were too colossal and undeserved! The extremely tired Anand had to fight against the fresh, well prepared Karpov. Even in these conditions he did not manage to win in "normal time", and in the first rapidplay game he escaped defeat simply by a miracle. Anand now, and this is not only my view, is much stronger than Karpov and would most probably have won if conditions had been equal (both players equally fresh or equally tired). Karpov has juridically become world champion, but in the eyes of nearly all chess players he is not so in effect.'

What can be done: after 1993 the question of who was the real champion – actual or 'juridical', was one that everyone decided for himself, based on his likings ... However, what for me is certain and is confirmed by the games given in this volume, is that Anatoly Karpov is one of the greatest epoch-creating players of the late 20th century, and his contribution to our knowledge of the subtleties of the ancient game is truly invaluable.

It is appropriate to conclude this account of the 12th world champion's career with the words of his long-standing trainer Igor Zaitsev:

'It is typical that with the black pieces Karpov has already been more attracted by those openings where the choice of variation remains with Black. For example, in the Caro-Kann – 4 ... Nd7 or 4 ... Bf5, in the Ruy Lopez – the Smyslov, Breyer or Zaitsev Variations. The same can be said about the Queen's Indian Defence, and the Nimzo-Indian Defence. In my view, this is a non-deliberate manifestation of the sensible efficiency, typical of this great player.

'In drawing up various opening conceptions, we, of course, mainly took into account the chess likings of Karpov himself. It has always seemed to me that, by beginning his direct preparations only at the very last moment, he gives something of a handicap to all his match opponents and with the years this habit of his has only become more deep-rooted. Karpov has never been considered an openings expert, in view of the nature of his talent. In his best years he was a colossal practical player with a staggering positional intuition, and he was always more inclined to trust his feeling, rather than long variations

adjusted to fit a certain result. But at the same time his contribution to opening theory is sufficiently great and distinctive, like the contribution of the triumvirate of world champions – Capablanca, Smyslov and Petrosian, with a similar attitude and approach to opening problems.’

In conclusion – the traditional selection of opinions by world champions.

Euwe: ‘By his style of play Karpov can be compared with the Cuban genius Capablanca, although there is also one important distinction. When you play through Capablanca’s games, the thought involuntarily occurs to you: oh, it’s all so simple, even I could do that. By contrast, Karpov’s games initially startle you by their strategy, which seems illogical, but soon it becomes clear that in fact his play is extremely logical. Like the Cuban, he is especially tenacious in difficult positions. Capablanca and Karpov are similar in one other feature – they lose extremely rarely ... The Karpov phenomenon has no analogues; at any event, there have been so such champions before him. I have in mind not his youth and the speed with which he climbed to the chess summit, but his amazingly stable results and balanced play. Excellent play. In it there is so much adult grandmaster reckoning, so much sobriety and quiet confidence in himself, and in his powers!’

Botvinnik: ‘Many experts consider Karpov to be a rationalist, an uncommonly cold-blooded fighter, to whom emotions are completely alien, and so on. Now the opposite can be affirmed: Karpov is emotional, like many people, but he masters and controls himself well, so that a false impression is created. He undoubtedly possesses a strong self-instruction program. He demonstrates an excellent understanding of positional principles, and he has no equals in the art of harmoniously arranging his pieces. His pieces are usually invulnerable, whereas the opponent’s pieces are subject to constant pressure. In this respect Karpov’s style is significantly better than that of Petrosian, who, after achieving an absolutely safe position for himself, would patiently wait for mistakes by the opponent. Karpov does not wait: he plays actively.’

Smyslov: ‘In Karpov’s play I have always been staggered by his amazing ability to soberly and absolutely accurately evaluate the position on the board. To evaluate quickly, without spending much time on analysis.

This comes from his fantastic chess intuition, from his innate talent. And after all, the correct evaluation of a position, the evaluation of your possibilities in it, is the basis of successful play. It is primarily this that distinguishes Karpov among the leading grandmasters in the world.'

Tal: 'Karpov is fantastically purposeful. He is like a tank, which cannot be diverted from its goal. His iron persistence is torture for the faint hearted. Not without reason have some of my colleagues lamented after losing to Karpov: it's impossible to play – he puts pressure on your mind. Karpov's character is the same as his play. Both in life, and at the chessboard, he is extremely purposeful. This is the main thing about him. It can be said that his strong aspects are precisely what I am lacking. Karpov has a simply classic way of converting an advantage – I have never learned to do this. At critical moments he is able to control his impulses – I cannot restrain my emotions ... Anatoly has always staggered me by his ability to defend, as they say, to the last, where many others would already have lost heart.'

Petrosian: 'Karpov demonstrates with his performances that he has a very purposeful nature. His chess outlook is clearly outlined. This is very important. Every improving talented player should have his outlook, his tastes, his likings, his point of view on certain chess problems – theoretical, practical and philosophical. Fischer has his firm states, and he is amazingly constant in his sympathies. We observe roughly the same with Karpov. True, Karpov's style is still evolving. I think that he will be a universal and versatile player.'

Spassky: 'Karpov is a chess genius, but in the ideological sense he is similar to Botvinnik. Karpov used the support of the Party to achieve his personal aims. And later he began to justify these as being the aims of the state ... But one has to give him his due: as a chess player he is indeed great.'

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Index of Games

[Anand.V-Karpov.A, FIDE World Championship Match, Lausanne 1998, 4th game](#)

[Bagirov.V-Korchnoi.V, 27th USSR Championship, Leningrad 1960, 16th round](#)

[Beliavsky.A-Korchnoi.V, Pula 1997](#)

[Filip.M-Korchnoi.V, Bucharest 1954, 12th round](#)

[Fischer.R-Korchnoi.V, Candidates Tournament, Curaçao 1962, 5th round](#)

[Furman.S-Korchnoi.V, 21st USSR Championship, Kiev 1954, 7th round](#)

[Gelfand.B-Korchnoi.V, Horgen 1994](#)

[Geller.E-Korchnoi.V, 27th USSR Championship, Leningrad 1960, 18th round](#)

[Geller.E-Korchnoi.V, Candidates Quarter-final Match, Moscow 1971, 8th game](#)

[Ivanchuk.V-Korchnoi.V, Tilburg 1989](#)

[Kamsky.G-Karpov.A, FIDE World Championship Match, Elista 1996, 6th game](#)

[Karpov.A-Anand.V, Candidates Match, Brussels 1991, 8th game](#)

[Karpov.A-Anand.V, FIDE World Championship Match, Lausanne 1998, 1st game](#)

[Karpov.A-Beliavsky.A, Biel 1992, 5th round](#)

[Karpov.A-Beliavsky.A, Linares 1993, 3rd round](#)

[Karpov.A-Dolmatov.S, Amsterdam 1980, 5th round](#)

[Karpov.A-Dorfman.I, 44th USSR Championship, Moscow 1976, 8th round](#)

[Karpov.A-Gelfand.B, FIDE Candidates Match, Sanghi Nagar 1995, 4th round](#)

[Karpov.A-Gligoric.S, San Antonio 1972, 8th round](#)

[Karpov.A-Hort.V, Alekhine Memorial Tournament, Moscow 1971, 11th round](#)

[Karpov.A-Kamsky.G, Moscow 1992, 6th round](#)

[Karpov.A-Korchnoi.V, Candidates Match, Moscow 1974, 2nd game](#)

[Karpov.A-Korchnoi.V, World Championship Match, Baguio 1978, 14th game](#)
[Karpov.A-Korchnoi.V, World Championship Match, Baguio 1978, 28th game](#)
[Karpov.A-Korchnoi.V, World Championship Match, Baguio 1978, 32nd game](#)
[Karpov.A-Korchnoi.V, World Championship Match, Merano 1981, 14th game](#)
[Karpov.A-Korchnoi.V, World Championship Match, Merano 1981, 18th game](#)
[Karpov.A-Korchnoi.V, World Championship Match, Merano 1981, 6th game](#)
[Karpov.A-Kramnik.V, Linares 1994, 11th round](#)
[Karpov.A-Kuzmin.G, Interzonal Tournament, Leningrad 1973, 7th round](#)
[Karpov.A-Miles.A, London 1982, 9th round](#)
[Karpov.A-Polugayevsky.L, Candidates Match, Moscow 1974, 4th game](#)
[Karpov.A-Polugayevsky.L, Candidates Match, Moscow 1974, 6th game](#)
[Karpov.A-Polugayevsky.L, Candidates Match, Moscow 1974, 8th game](#)
[Karpov.A-Portisch.L, Turin 1982, 6th round](#)
[Karpov.A-Ribli.Z, Amsterdam 1980, 13th round](#)
[Karpov.A-Salov.V, Linares 1993, 1st round](#)
[Karpov.A-Sax.G, Linares 1983](#)
[Karpov.A-Shirov.A, Biel 1992, 13th round](#)
[Karpov.A-Smejkal.J, Leningrad 1977, 3rd round](#)
[Karpov.A-Sokolov.A, Candidates Match, Linares 1987, 10th game](#)
[Karpov.A-Sokolov.A, Candidates Match, Linares 1987, 6th game](#)
[Karpov.A-Spassky.B, Candidates Match, Leningrad 1974, 11th game](#)
[Karpov.A-Spassky.B, Candidates Match, Leningrad 1974, 3rd game](#)
[Karpov.A-Spassky.B, Candidates Match, Leningrad 1974, 5th game](#)
[Karpov.A-Spassky.B, Candidates Match, Leningrad 1974, 7th game](#)
[Karpov.A-Spassky.B, Candidates Match, Leningrad 1974, 9th game](#)
[Karpov.A-Spassky.B, Tilburg 1980, 9th round](#)
[Karpov.A-Tal.M, 44th USSR Championship, Moscow 1976, 10th round](#)
[Karpov.A-Tal.M, Bugojno 1980, 8th round](#)
[Karpov.A-Timman.J, Montreal 1979, 2nd round](#)

[Karpov.A-Uhlmann.W, Madrid 1973, 12th round](#)
[Karpov.A-Unzicker.W, World Olympiad, Nice 1974](#)
[Karpov.A-Vaganian.R, Skopje 1976, 1st round](#)
[Karpov.A-Yusupov.A, 55th USSR Championship, Moscow 1988, 9th round](#)
[Karpov.A-Yusupov.A, Candidates Match, London 1989, 8th game](#)
[Karpov.A-Yusupov.A, Tilburg 1993, 5th round](#)
[Kasparov.G-Korchnoi.V, Candidates Match, London 1983, 1st game](#)
[Korchnoi.V-Bacrot.E, Reykjavik 2003](#)
[Korchnoi.V-Fischer.R, Candidates Tournament, Curaçao 1962, 12th round](#)
[Korchnoi.V-Gipslis.A, Match-tournament, Tallinn 1967](#)
[Korchnoi.V-Greenfeld.A, Beersheva 1990](#)
[Korchnoi.V-Hulak.K, Interzonal Tournament, Zagreb 1987, 10th round](#)
[Korchnoi.V-Karpov.A, World Championship Match, Baguio 1978, 13th game](#)
[Korchnoi.V-Karpov.A, World Championship Match, Baguio 1978, 17th game](#)
[Korchnoi.V-Karpov.A, World Championship Match, Baguio 1978, 21st game](#)
[Korchnoi.V-Karpov.A, World Championship Match, Baguio 1978, 29th game](#)
[Korchnoi.V-Karpov.A, World Championship Match, Baguio 1978, 31st game](#)
[Korchnoi.V-Karpov.A, World Championship Match, Baguio 1978, 5th game](#)
[Korchnoi.V-Karpov.A, World Championship Match, Merano 1981, 13th game](#)
[Korchnoi.V-Karpov.A, World Championship Match, Merano 1981, 9th game](#)
[Korchnoi.V-Nijboer.F, Netherlands 1993](#)
[Korchnoi.V-Petrosian.T, Alekhine Memorial Tournament, Moscow 1975, 11th round](#)
[Korchnoi.V-Piket.J, Match, Nijmegen 1993, 3rd game](#)
[Korchnoi.V-Polugayevsky.L, Candidates Semi-Final Match, Evian 1977, 7th game](#)
[Korchnoi.V-Portisch.L, Candidates Match, Bad Kissingen 1983, 3rd game](#)
[Korchnoi.V-Shirov.A, Buenos Aires 1993, 5th round](#)

[Korchnoi.V-Spassky.B, Candidates Final Match, Belgrade 1977, 7th game](#)
[Korchnoi.V-Svidler.P, St Petersburg 1997](#)
[Korchnoi.V-Tal.M, 32nd USSR Championship, Kiev 1964/65, 9th round](#)
[Korchnoi.V-Tal.M, Wijk aan Zee 1968, 8th round](#)
[Kurajica.B-Karpov.A, Skopje 1976, 5th round](#)
[Larsen.B-Korchnoi.V, Interzonal Tournament, Leningrad 1973, 8th round](#)
[Ljubojevic.L-Karpov.A, Manila 1976, 3rd round](#)
[Matanovic.A-Korchnoi.V, Wijk aan Zee 1968, 2nd round](#)
[Minic.D-Korchnoi.V, Bucharest 1966, 5th round](#)
[Petrosian.T-Korchnoi.V, Moscow v. Leningrad Match, 1965](#)
[Polugayevsky.L-Karpov.A, Candidates Match, Moscow 1974, 5th game](#)
[Polugayevsky.L-Korchnoi.V, 27th USSR Championship, Leningrad 1960, 10th round](#)
[Polugayevsky.L-Korchnoi.V, Candidates Match, Buenos Aires 1980, 14th game](#)
[Polugayevsky.L-Korchnoi.V, Candidates Semi-Final Match, Evian 1977, 2nd game](#)
[Polugayevsky.L-Korchnoi.V, Candidates Semi-Final Match, Evian 1977, 6th game](#)
[Serper.G-Korchnoi.V, Groningen 1993, 9th round](#)
[Shamkovich.L-Korchnoi.V, 27th USSR Championship, Leningrad 1960, 7th round](#)
[Simagin.V-Korchnoi.V, Moscow 1960, 8th round](#)
[Spassky.B-Karpov.A, Candidates Match, Leningrad 1974, 10th game](#)
[Spassky.B-Karpov.A, Candidates Match, Leningrad 1974, 6th game](#)
[Spassky.B-Karpov.A, Candidates Match, Leningrad 1974, 8th game](#)
[Spassky.B-Korchnoi.V, Candidates Final Match, Belgrade 1977, 2nd game](#)
[Suetin.A-Korchnoi.V, Leningrad 1967, 12th round](#)
[Tal.M-Korchnoi.V, 25th USSR Championship, Riga 1958, 9th round](#)
[Timman.J-Karpov.A, Montreal 1979, 11th round](#)
[Timman.J-Korchnoi.V, 21st Olympiad, Nice 1974](#)
[Timman.J-Korchnoi.V, Match, Leeuwarden 1976, 3rd game](#)
[Vasyukov.E-Korchnoi.V, 32nd USSR Championship, Kiev 1964/65, 10th round](#)

[Yusupov.A-Karpov.A, Candidates Match, London 1989, 3rd game](#)